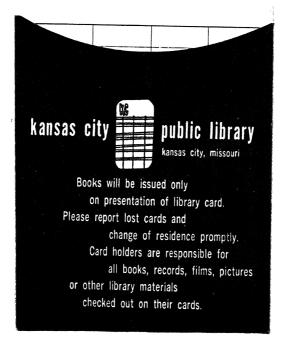


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Walk Your Way to BETTER DANCING



LAWRENCE A. HOSTETLER

Walk Your Way to BETTER DANCING

By LAWRENCE A. HOSTETLER

Author of The Art of Social Dancing

REVISED EDITION

Illustrated with Diagrams and Reproductions from Photographs

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Preface

Dancing, as a rule, interprets music through movement. Ballroom dancing is no exception. To evaluate the present trend in ballroom dancing, it is only necessary to note what the dance bands are playing.

The fox-trot in different tempos—slow, medium and fast—is still the number one dance. But close behind are the popular Cuban and South American rhythms; especially in the larger cities where there are numerous Latin American bands. Not only rumbas, but also more sambas and tangos are being played.

With the marriage of American jazz to Cuban rumba to create the "mambo," those with jitterbug tendencies can now express themselves to Latin American rhythms.

The field of dance instruction has likewise witnessed some interesting developments. When writing *The Art of Social Dancing*, the author found it expedient to coin the term "dance-walk" to designate the simple, unvaried progressive movement of the fox-trot and tango. As chords are fashioned from a musical scale, so fundamental fig-

ures can be derived from the dance-walk. During the intervening years, the value and importance of the dance-walk as a necessary foundation to modern ball-room dancing have become firmly established. Moreover, because it is based upon the same principles of body mechanics that apply to smooth efficient walking, the person learning to dance is, at the same time, improving his posture and carriage.

Another contribution to better dance instruction has been a more logical and coherent method of presenting the material. The presentation of dance steps to a pupil or class can be made in several ways. Some instructors base most of their dance patterns on the basic waltz step regardless of rhythm. Others teach set combinations of steps which the pupil memorizes by repetition with little

understanding of their component parts.

The important point to be considered is the fact that the leader is also his own choreographer. He must plan the sequence of steps an instant before executing them. Therefore, it is essential for him to have a clear concept of his material. The rhythm and pattern of each figure and combination should be mentally pictured before the

lead is given.

After teaching thousands of pupils and working with many different groups, including those at Teachers College, Columbia University; New York University; Savage School for Physical Education; New Jersey State Teachers' College, and Horace Mann High School, the author has devised a simple, practical yet all-inclusive method of teaching social dancing. The object has been to present a complete and clear picture of each ballroom dance which will serve as a guide for both the leader and the one following.

Briefly, the method is as follows: Each type of dance is given a vocabulary of about half a dozen steps. Most of these figures consist of three transfers of weight to a measure of music. With a few exceptions, including the waltz and some steps of the medium fox-trot, the

rhythm of each figure is quick-quick-slow.

The figures of certain dances, such as the waltz, rumba, mambo, samba and lindy, are joined together directly without intervening dance-walk steps. On the other hand, the dance-walk is used extensively to link the fundamental figures of the tango and all three forms of the fox-trot. Moreover, each dance has one particular figure that is the keynote of that dance, as a musical composition carries through it a certain theme. This figure is called the "basic step."

This approach to dance instruction might be compared to the structure of a sentence. The separate movements that comprise the figures represent letters of the alphabet. The figures in turn constitute a vocabulary of threeletter words. After building up a useful vocabulary, the leader combines and rearranges these words or figures to form interesting and varied sentences or combinations. When the dance-walk is used, it can be compared to a conjunction. As the indiscriminate use of "and" as a connective may weaken a sentence, so the dance-walk between figures should be used sparingly. Learn to connect them directly. As a rule, avoid taking more than two or three dance-walk steps in succession. Again, when two figures overlap, that is, the finish of one is the beginning of the other, it can be compared to a liaison of the French language in which two words are joined and pronounced as one. Instead of the usual rhythm of quick-quick-slow, there may be four or even six quick steps in succession.

Besides this brief explanation of how steps of the various dances are presented, there are four other important points to be considered. A complete picture of the author's method of dance instruction includes five main points:

1. Body control. Muscles and joints are first condi-

tioned and made responsive.

2. The dance-walk. Since this is based on a natural walk as determined by good body mechanics, it is the next logical step.

3. Moving with a partner. After the forward and backward dance-walk is understood by the individual,

it is practiced with a partner.

4. Leading and following. All modern ballroom dancing is subject to this phase of the art. But one's ability to lead or follow depends upon mastery of the three preceding steps.

5. Steps and combinations in all rhythms. The four preceding points are merely a preparation for properly

executing dance steps.

The first four points are covered in Chapters I to V, while the remaining chapters elaborate upon point five. However, these sections cannot be completely separated. Technic is only a means to an end. Dancing is the important thing. The two sections must be judiciously correlated. Moreover, it is not necessary or even advisable to master one dance rhythm before attempting another. However, it is important to differentiate clearly among them, not only in pattern of steps, but also in subtleties of rhythm and style.

Another helpful factor toward better dance instruction has been the adoption of a more suitable terminology. Descriptive terms are useful, not only for teaching purposes and the writing of notes, but also in aiding the pupil to fix in mind the various dance patterns. In the past names have been applied to steps and combinations without logic or reason. In this book some of the terms commonly used in the past have been replaced by simple, more appropriate names which in most cases describe the action of the figure. This work of modernizing the terminology was carried out by a committee, of which

the author was a member, under the auspices of the Danc-

ing Masters of America.

No book can adequately replace competent, personal instruction. But the author hopes that this volume will help to arouse the interest of the beginner in regard to the social, physical and esthetic advantages of ballroom dancing correctly done; that the more experienced dancer will be able to improve his technic while adding to his vocabulary of steps and combinations; that it will help the teacher to find the answers to certain troublesome questions, and at the same time improve the standards of this branch of the dance art.

While emphasis has been placed on technic, it is because the pleasure one derives from an activity is more or less in proportion to one's skill and ability in performing it. Expertness promotes confidence, which in turn develops poise both physical and mental. But aside from the satisfaction derived from the knowledge of being able to do a thing well, there is also the duty that is owed to one's partners. Like the art of living, social dancing is a co-operative affair, and so long as it retains its present form, the participant should consider it an obligation to perfect his technic to the best of his ability.

In conclusion the author wishes to express his appreciation to Rudy Vallée for useful information concerning the slow fox-trot—a type of dance music in which he pioneered; to Cy Mann, publicity director of Xavier Cugat's orchestra and student of Latin-American music, for a profitable discussion of Cuban rhythms, and to Dr. Josephine Rathbone of Teachers College, Columbia University, and Dr. Valerie Hunt of U.C.L.A. for helpful suggestions concerning the chapter on "Body Control."

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CHAPTER I

Body Control

ANCING expresses emotion through rhythmic movement. The instrument for expressing this emotion is your own body. You wouldn't expect delightful music from a dilapidated, out-of-tune piano. Neither can you hope to create "visual music" with an awkward, tense, unresponsive body. The first objective, therefore, is to

prepare the instrument; to put your body in tune.

Those who study more difficult dance forms, such as ballet, modern, or exhibition ballroom, usually take it for granted that many strenuous hours will have to be spent in conditioning the body, perfecting muscle control, and acquiring a foundation technic before presenting a completed dance number. On the other hand, many persons approach the study of the social dance at the top by learning a few steps and combinations with little or no conception of body balance, the dance-walk, how to move harmoniously with a partner, or the principles of leading and following. Yet a thorough understanding of these four points should be a prelude, or at least an

accompaniment, to the acquisition of a vocabulary of dance steps which is point five in this method of dance presentation. In fact, your enjoyment of social dancing will be more or less in proportion to your mastery of these foundation principles.

What is the reason for this cursory, superficial approach to ballroom dancing? Perhaps it is due to its seeming simplicity. The great percentage of dancing is done to fox-trot rhythm and the basis of the fox-trot is walking. We think of walking as a natural movement, and by inference we reach the same conclusion in regard to social dancing. In fact, the statement is often made, "She is a natural-born dancer"; or conversely, "Dancing doesn't come naturally to me. I guess I wasn't cut out for it." In order to recognize the fallacy of these remarks, let us first discuss some of the implications of the word "natural" as it relates to movement.

For the purpose of this discussion let us consider three different aspects of the term. First, there is the naturalness of manner that expresses your personality. It differentiates you from other individuals. It can be summed up in two words, "Be yourself." But your movements and actions are conditioned by many different factors, such as childhood background, occupation, home life, habits of posture, etc.-in fact, your complete environment plus heredity. Therefore, in any "natural" dancing your movements would be expressive of this background. Posture faults tend to become exaggerated on the dance floor. For example, if you walk with a side sway of the body, you are apt to become a "pump-handle" dancer. If you habitually walk from the knees instead of swinging the legs from the hips, or carry your weight back on your heels, the chances are that you would become a "knee-knocker" on the dance floor unless you developed new habits of walking. If your usual posture resembles a question-mark, then most likely your attempts to dance would suggest the letter S. Except for those who are completely satisfied with their present selves, this version of the term "natural" is usually quite inadequate.

This brings us to a second interpretation: the naturalness of movement as intended by nature. We see it expressed in the lithe, graceful movements of a cat. The women of Bali show it in their posture and carriagewhether by nature, or by precept and training is difficult to say. Emil Ludwig, in his book, The Nile, tells of a certain African tribe living near the headwaters of that river whose bodily grace makes the average white person seem awkward by comparison. But these are the exceptions. Gracefulness with most civilized humans is an acquired characteristic. To quote from Schiller, "Grace is a beauty not given by nature but produced by the subject itself; and as the beauty of the human form does honor to the Creator, so do cheerfulness and grace do honor to their possessor. One is a natural, the other a personal gift."

Thus we have two different pictures of what is natural. The first is a naturalness that is often hampered by nervous tension, bad habits, and improper training. The second indicates co-operation with nature. One is an expression of ourselves as we really are; the other, as we should strive to be. To illustrate, when the voice teacher says, "Breathe naturally," he has in mind this second meaning—the free, unrestricted use of the diaphragm, ribs, abdominal, back and pelvic muscles as nature had planned, the manner in which a newborn babe breathes before inhibitions, constricting clothing, bad posture habits, and other concomitants of civilization set in. What response does he usually get? Generally, a forced inhalation with the diaphragm going up when it should be going down; heaving chest and shoulders: tightened muscles of the throat and lower jaw.

In other words, the desire to dance is natural. But the

manner in which this desire is expressed depends upon the responsiveness of one's body. The former is inborn, although it may be latent. The latter can be trained.

Let us suppose that you are one of those fortunate few who have developed exceptionally good co-ordination; that all movements are perfectly integrated. In addition, let us assume that you have an excellent ear for music. Does it follow that you will "naturally" become a good ballroom dancer? Without expert instruc-

tion and guidance it is quite unlikely.

To illustrate, you might potentially be a great actor or actress, but until your abilities are properly developed and directed—in other words, until you have acquired a technic—most likely your talents would be lost to the public. You may say that many great dramatic artists never studied acting. Perhaps not in the sense of formal education. But they learned the long, hard way—by apprenticeship and the trial-and-error method. As a result, many of them never graduated from the "ham" stage, because they merely copied the style and mannerisms of other actors without delving beneath the surface.

In the same manner, ballroom dancing can be learned the hard way. At least it is apt to be hard on your friends. But many hours of grief and discomfiture can be avoided by learning from the beginning why as well as how. It is usually taken for granted that the leader should know what he is about to do, but there seems to be a widespread opinion that it is unnecessary or even inadvisable for the girl to know too much about what she is doing; that information breeds initiative. She should "just follow." The writer cannot subscribe to that form of reasoning. There is no substitute for knowledge and understanding. If certain difficulties arise before this knowledge becomes crystallized into habitual responses, it is because we can think of only one thing at

a time. But the resulting sense of confidence is ample reward for the mental and physical effort.

It is the unsureness caused by lack of understanding that results in so much mental anguish. Will I be able to follow? How do I look on the floor? What if I should step on his feet? Suppose he is a poor dancer? Suppose he is an excellent dancer? What if I should take away the lead? Such lack of confidence, resulting largely from lack of knowledge, causes nervousness. Nervousness expresses itself in muscle tension. Since it is practically impossible for a girl who is uncertain and tense to respond to a lead, her nervousness increases with obvious results.

This prevalent attitude was expressed recently by a young lady while she was explaining her reasons for taking lessons.

"As soon as I begin to dance," she said, "I automatically tighten up. I seem to be unable to relax while on the floor."

Of course this was to be expected considering the fact that she had no conception of the basic principles. Modern ballroom dancing is far more than moving around the floor with a partner in time with the music; or, as Ruth St. Denis puts it, "rhythmic hugging."

Certain dances, such as the lindy hop and the mambo, permit almost unlimited personal expression. But form in this case is a question of degree rather than of esthetics. Stress is placed upon eccentricity of style rather than beauty of line. With more conservative dances, however, such as the fox-trot, waltz, tango and rumba, technic and form are more important than figures. It is the way they are done, rather than the steps themselves, that differentiate couples on the floor. Good style depends upon a sound technic.

Which brings us to the third adaptation of the expression "natural." As distinguished from instinctive

reactions and normal activities, such as breathing, walking, climbing, sitting, etc., it refers primarily to learned skills. This type of movement can only be acquired by humans, since it requires thought and the ability to reason.

For example, man, like other animals, will make rapid "dog-paddling" motions with his arms if he happens to fall into deep water without knowing how to swim. But this differs widely from the controlled, efficient crawl stroke which has been gradually developed over a period of many years, and is based upon a careful study of body mechanics. One is a natural, primitive reaction, while the other becomes an acquired naturalness only after long practice.

It is in this third classification that ballroom dancing must be placed. Although it is based on body economy and efficient walking, certain modifications of the walk must be made before good dancing results. For example, no one naturally steps backward correctly in the dancewalk. It is an acquired movement. In fact, the natural manner of stepping is usually opposite to the correct form. That is, a person as a rule will step backward with a bent knee and then straighten it, instead of first stepping with a fully extended leg and following it with a slight bend of the knee. But with a little intelligent practice under proper guidance the correct dance-walk quickly becomes an "acquired natural habit."

Then, too, a couple's dance position requires certain changes in their normal walk in order to permit freedom of movement. Again, in regard to the rumba, movements of the knees and hips are based on normal body mechanics, but the timing of the steps in relation to the change of weight becomes a fixed habit only after

considerable practice.

Another phase of the dance that demands special attention is the art of leading and following. While it may be in accordance with nature for man to take the active and the girl the passive role, the ability to lead or follow well depends upon several different factors which can be mastered only by study and application of the underlying principles. As so often happens, a girl by continual practice learns to follow blindly a certain partner but is unable to adjust herself to the idiosyncrasies of other dancers. But success in modern ballroom dancing depends upon mutual adaptation to various styles and different personalities. When dancing is studied according to principles of good body mechanics and is combined with a knowledge of how to lead and follow, one acquires a lasting technic that is serviceable under all conditions.

The first five chapters deal with the important foundation technic which gives style and form to your dancing when it is applied to the various figures and combinations described in the remaining chapters. But this chapter will help you to condition your body, or keep it in condition, and to develop the necessary muscle control which will make your body a responsive instrument of the dance. It makes it easier to acquire a good technic, which is a prerequisite to any art. The story is told of Paderewski, that after playing before Queen Victoria she exclaimed, "Mr. Paderewski, you are a genius."

"Perhaps, Your Majesty," he replied, "but before I was a genius I was a drudge."

BODY CONDITIONING

The body is a living machine. In fact, when highly trained, it is the most efficient machine in the world, nearly twice as effective as the best gasoline motor. But like any mechanism, it will tend to deteriorate and wear out if not properly cared for. Since we have to live with it, why not do our best to keep it operating with opti-

mum efficiency? According to a prominent health authority, we should practice the following program daily in order to make the body strong and supple and to keep it a useful servant:

1. Do movements to contract all our muscles.

2. Do movements to give full mobility to all our joints.

3. Have intermittent periods for relaxation.

This schedule is not as formidable as it may sound. Of course, if you have allowed muscles to lose their elasticity, if they have acquired a protective layer of fat through inaction, or if one set of muscles has been permitted to overpower their opposing group, thus pulling the body out of alignment, then don't expect miracles. It will take time and effort to undo the effects of months or years of neglect. But once you have the body back to its normal condition, it is not difficult to maintain that standard. Ten or fifteen minutes of intelligent exercise daily will usually suffice if accompanied by a brisk walk or the equivalent amount of dancing.

Regarding the periods of relaxation, they should be consciously worked into your schedule whenever possible. Learn to relax while sitting at your desk, or riding in a car. If you get an opportunity, lie flat on your back with the knees raised or the feet elevated. Let your spine melt into the firm, supporting surface. A few minutes of complete relaxation may leave you more re-

freshed than an hour of fitful sleep.

Few of us have the opportunity in our daily routine to make sufficient use of all our muscles. Some groups get overworked while others are used scarcely at all. Most of us tend to be one-sided. Postural faults are often acquired by such simple actions as standing habitually on one leg, or by carrying objects always on the same arm. Slight spinal curvatures often develop which may become permanent unless corrected. An expert dance instructor can usually recognize these minor curvatures. With proper exercises many of them can be alleviated. Ballroom dancing itself, when done in accordance with good body mechanics, will correct many minor postural faults. Aside from swimming, no other activity equals dancing as a means of bringing all groups of muscles into balanced action.

Modern social dancing, with the exception of some forms of the lindy hop, is a comparatively mild branch of the dance art. Like walking, it is stimulating without being too strenuous. And it has the added advantage of being done to musical rhythms, which is helpful in releasing muscle tension.

Just as walking can be beneficial or of little worth depending upon how it is done, the value of ballroom dancing as a physical activity likewise depends largely upon how you do it. If you carry over your postural faults to the dance floor, most of the health benefits are lost. For example, half sliding on the balls of the feet with partially bent knees; following the line of least resistance and doing certain steps repeatedly on the same side or turning always in the same direction; dropping one shoulder; letting the buttocks protrude; perfecting the dance-walk only in one direction—all these detract from the health value as well as the pleasure of ballroom dancing.

But when the dance-walk is done correctly both forward and backward, muscles of the feet, ankles, and legs are strengthened and kept in good tone. Likewise, holding the body in proper alignment conditions the muscles that determine good posture. Executing turns in accordance with the principles explained in Chapter VI brings into use most of the muscles of the upper body.

However, dancing should be done with a minimum of effort. The primary purpose is social recreation and emotional release through rhythmic movement. Healthful exercise is a valuable by-product. If dancing becomes more work than pleasure, it defeats its own purpose. Some dances may be done strenuously, but if you tire easily in the simpler dance steps, it is probably due to faulty technic.

In order to keep your body receptive to this technic, a few exercises are given at the end of this chapter. The object has been to stress the use of those muscles most useful in preparing the body as an instrument of the dance, and also to supplement ballroom dancing as a

health factor.

In connection with these exercises it may be well to mention briefly their effect on body weight. While the primary object is body control, weight equalization also can take place. The exercises for the hips and waist are especially helpful. But weight depends upon calory consumption and assimilation. To burn up excess fuel requires a tremendous amount of energy. Therefore, any program of excess weight reduction should be accompanied by a sensible diet. On the other hand, dieting without exercise often leaves the muscles in a flabby condition. The two should be judiciously combined. What you eat determines your weight. What you do determines your shape. Fat is formless-muscles give contours.

It seems to be a common failing of human nature always to seek the easy way of doing things; to get a lot with little effort; to eat one's cake and have it too. This is especially noticeable in regard to disciplining our own body. Just as some persons expect to be taught the art of dancing in "six easy lessons" without too much effort on their part and regardless of their body condition, likewise a certain percentage of the people allow themselves to be guided by similar misleading advertisements in reference to weight reduction. They are led to believe that those extra pounds of flesh will melt away without effort on their own part.

Medical authorities agree that no form of internal medication has been discovered that can cause one to reduce without the danger of some ill effects on the body. Several pounds of moisture may temporarily be removed by drying out the body with certain types of baths, but this weight will be regained as soon as you begin to quench the resulting thirst. Neither does massage break down the "fat cells," as many persons naïvely believe, for the simple reason that there are no fat cells. Fat is deposited between the functioning cells not only on the surface but throughout the body. Therefore, while massage may improve circulation or help you to relax, any reducing will be on the part of the masseur who is using the energy. In other words, there are only two safe forms of reducing-diet and exercise.

BODY MOBILITY

The second point, "Exercises to give full mobility to all your joints," is in reality a corollary of point one, since there can be no controlled movement at a joint without muscle contraction. On the other hand, muscles can contract without producing any appreciable amount of motion. It is this form of muscle tension, which is not translated into movement, that is most fatiguing. For example, standing still requires more effort and is more tiring than is walking.

To obtain the greatest benefit from the exercises, you should have a general understanding and consciousness of how muscles function. A muscle can only pull. Therefore, in order to have balance and stability, each group of muscles—they never act singly—must have an opposing set to counteract their pull or the force of gravity.

To illustrate, the biceps, or flexor muscle on the front of the upper arm, causes the elbow to bend. But no action could take place unless the opposing triceps on the back of the arm were relaxed and allowed to stretch. Conversely, to straighten the arm the triceps, or extensor, contracts while the biceps is relaxed.

It is this alternate contraction and relaxation that regulates all movements. Unless the opposing muscle group lets go, there can be no action. Many persons who feel that they are stiff-jointed merely lack muscle control. Opposing groups fail to co-operate. This apparent stiffness often occurs in the ankle-joint until the pupil learns how to release the tension. Thus, when doing the exercises, observe not only the effect on the contracting muscles, but also how the opposite group that are being stretched react. For example, if you are bending sideways to the right, the muscles on that side are contracted while those on the left side relax and are stretched. When a muscle is stretched, its natural tendency is to contract immediately like a rubber band. Therefore, to obtain greater elasticity, hold the stretched position for a few seconds.

Another point that needs to be clarified is the interpretation of the expression "full mobility." The degree of mobility varies considerably with different individuals. Besides muscle development and control, it involves ligaments which surround the joint and hold opposing bones in contact. We speak of a person as being "loose-jointed" or "tight-jointed." And the expression is often heard concerning an extremely supple person that he is "double-jointed." Of course there is no such thing. Many contortion acrobats have acquired their extreme limberness by means of continued stretching rather than from any unusual innate qualification. It is difficult to set a standard regarding the degree of mobility that each individual should possess. Let it suffice to say that each

of us should endeavor to increase the range of movement in each of our joints. We will be well repaid for the effort in more graceful movements, better circulation and

greater body economy.

When the action of a joint is limited to a fraction of its possible range of movement, it tends to become set within that restricted sphere. The average adult has long since ceased to keep his joints capable of their normal full range. Age is felt through curtailed action of the joints sooner and more evidently than in any other way. Baseball players usually slow up first in their legs. Movements of the leg depend upon the joints, especially the knee and hip. The aged person uses the guide-rail while he cautiously goes up or down a stairway. Youth takes it in his stride. Age isn't a question of years. It is entirely a matter of physical, mental, and emotional fitness. The author at present has for a pupil a spry young man of sixty-five, who has kept his body supple by refusing to associate age with inaction. A woman in her late fifties, who looks nearer forty, is supplementing her ballroom dancing with tap and ballet exercises.

Of course discretion must be used in regard to the type and strenuousness of exercise. But that applies to a child of six as well as to a person of sixty. The idea that it is difficult to learn new activities after a certain age is an exploded theory. It has been proved that learning ability changes surprisingly little with advancing years. What an older person lacks in excess energy is more than compensated for by better direction of his energies combined with greater development of reasoning powers. A supple mind equalizes any loss of suppleness in the muscles. All forms of modern ballroom dancing furnish an ideal means of keeping a youthful body as well as a young outlook on life. The two factors supplement each

other.

We also need a certain amount of leeway in our range

of movement in order to absorb the bumps and jars of our daily life. The supple, relaxed person is much less apt to get hurt when he falls. Allow for that extra body strain, just as a singer always vocalizes a few notes higher than he ever expects to sing, or the professional dancer stretches his muscles beyond a point that would be required during a routine.

RELAXATION

Points one and two stress action. Every action has its reaction. The reaction to work is rest. After a muscle contracts it must relax. The ability to relax is one of the most important factors in our lives. It enables us to go

through life on roller-bearings, so to speak.

Like sleep and the subconscious we talk about relaxation a great deal but we have difficulty in defining it. It is as elusive as a half-remembered dream. Because it is a sensation, each one of us must become acquainted with relaxation through personal experience. Oftentimes we think we are relaxed, only to discover that certain groups of muscles have refused to let go.

Perhaps we can reach a better understanding of the subject by comparing it with the phenomenon of heat and cold. As cold is defined in terms of absence of heat, in the same way relaxation can be thought of as lack of tension. Theoretically, there is some degree of heator motion-until absolute zero is reached. Likewise there is a certain degree of tension in a muscle as long

as the tissue is living.

However, to describe the minute amount of normal tension that all healthy muscles maintain we use a special term-tonicity. It is what gives a muscle an elastic quality. When a muscle lacks good tone, we say it is flabby or inelastic. Reducing too rapidly without exercise often brings on this condition.

To understand tonicity we can think of a muscle as

being composed of many groups or bundles of fibers which work together as a unit. In each fiber is a nerve ending that reacts to any stimulus, whether from the brain or the sympathetic nervous system. Even when a muscle is completely at rest, as during a sound sleep, messages are continually being sent to the separate fibers, causing minute imperceptible contractions. However, not all the bundles of fibers are stimulated simultaneously. Different groups contract alternately. Thus as in all physiological functions nature has provided a delicate balance. She tries to protect us against excessive fatigue. Work is alternated with rest. Even the heart muscles, which we think of as working almost continuously, rest about fifteen hours out of each twenty-four.

The body can generate just so much heat or energy. As in a machine, part of this energy is required to keep it running. Any excess amount can be directed into other channels. We can have an efficient, graceful body or one that is prodigal and awkward, depending upon how this energy is used. Body economy and graceful movements go hand in hand, while awkwardness is associated with waste motion.

By learning to relax consciously, we can regulate to some extent the expenditure of our energy. Check up on small, daily activities to see whether or not you are extravagant in this respect. Do you write with your tongue? Talk with your hands? Open a can with your lower jaw? Solve a problem by wrinkling the brow? Most of us use energy all out of proportion to the need for a particular task.

Every thought and emotion tends to express itself in movement. Tests have shown that even thoughts on abstract subjects result in slight changes of muscle tension although imperceptible to the participant.

Conversely, the manner in which we control our movements and bodily attitudes in turn affects our emotions. William James, in his *Principles of Psychology*, has shown that different postures of the body have a definite influence upon the emotions. If you know that you can walk gracefully across a room, that you can sit in quiet repose while remaining mentally alert and attentive, that you present an attractive picture on the dance floor, there is a resulting sense of confidence and self-assurance which in turn gives added poise, both mental and physical.

To reach toward perfection in any activity, we should strive for economy of movement. The expert in any field, from a shortstop to a skilled mechanic, tries to avoid waste motion; to obtain optimum results with a minimum of energy. He learns to move rhythmically. Rhythmic movements depend upon controlled relaxation—using the precise degree of tension in each part of the body to co-ordinate all movements most efficiently.

The essence of dancing is rhythmic movement. Bodily rhythm is not to be confused with one's response to musical rhythm, although the two forms are usually associated. The ability to move rhythmically is a universal trait; an innate quality possessed not only by man but also by all forms of animal life. Our appreciation of musical rhythms, on the other hand, depends upon our ability to distinguish the arrangement of accented beats in a measure. Individuals vary greatly in their response to musical rhythms. It seems to be more highly developed among African races. Many instances of apparent inability to keep time with music is due to lack of understanding of the musical pattern. Some persons are confused by the numerous in-between beats, or by vocal accompaniments which do not always coincide in accent with the accented beats of a measure. The ear can be trained to recognize the different rhythmic patterns which characterize the various types of dance music. With the description of the dances the rhythm and method of counting each dance will be explained.

Good dancing results when one's inborn reaction to a musical rhythm is expressed in terms of perfectly coordinated movements of the body. Gracefulness is a product of body economy. Excess tension produces uneven, jerky movements, waste motion, unnecessary fatigue.

The body must pay for any extravagance. Fatigue effect, in the form of lactic acid, accumulates in the muscles and interferes with their efficiency. Energy and fatigue fight a continuous battle. If we don't co-operate by giving the muscles a chance to recuperate, fatigue

may get the upper hand.

We usually associate fatigue with physical work. But that may be only one of the reasons for that tired feeling. More harmful and insidious forms of fatigue are caused by mental effort and emotional disturbances. Our stock of energy may also be depleted by the wrong type of clothing, noisy surroundings, eye strain, the weather, and contacts with other people. Donald A. Laird, Ph.D., Sc.D., and Charles G. Muller, point out in their recent book, *Energy and Sleep*, that physical fatigue is seldom harmful, and with proper rest one usually recovers quickly from its effects. Mental fatigue, on the other hand, is apt to have more serious consequences because the lactic acid is not dissipated by means of increased circulation.

Of the three forms of fatigue, however, that caused by the emotions tends to be the most dangerous. Aside from the continued excess tension produced in the muscles through fear, worry, anger, anxiety, etc., the entire body metabolism is altered. Glandular disturbances upset the delicate chemical balance. Since the victim fails to recognize any reason for his tired feeling and listlessness, and doctors assure him that he is organically sound, he becomes more worried and thus more tired than ever. The result is a vicious circle that can be checked only through control of the emotions. Substitution is the best remedy: constructive emotions for destructive ones. A different outlook on life is required. While one's mental attitude and emotional state may militate against conscious relaxation, it may be acquired through the rhythmic movements and social contacts of ballroom dancing. Throughout the ages dancing has been a natural means of releasing the emotions.

Besides being necessary to replenish our stock of reserve energy, relaxation is important from another viewpoint: that is, its effect on movement. Movement, like the voice, has different qualities. The quality is determined partly by the degree of muscle tension. What breath control is to singing, muscle control is to dancing. Both purposes—quality of movement and conservation of energy—are served at the same time, because the saving of energy through relaxation results in body economy, and body economy is the essence of poise and grace, which are but a manifestation of body control.

Relaxation and tension are relative terms. A muscle can be consciously tensed or relaxed to only a certain degree. This range of tension may be compared to the color spectrum which indicates the limited range of light waves that affect the eye. Above the violet rays are still shorter, invisible ones called ultra-violet rays. In a muscle the corresponding degree of tension beyond conscious control is called hypertension, which occurs when we get a cramp or spasm. At the other extremity of the visual field are the invisible infra-red rays which are longer than the visible red. Comparably, the degree of tension below a normal, healthy, muscle tonicity is called hypotension, which is associated with a flabby, inelastic condition of the muscle. We should make it a point to tense and relax all our muscles regularly within

this limited range between hypertension and hypotension.

This ability can be acquired by practice. In fact, the two forms of exercise can be effectively combined. That is, follow tensing and stretching exercises with those that produce a feeling of relaxation, because the latter is a natural reaction to the former. The ability to relax consciously is developed through recognition of the accompanying sensation. By repetition the desired result can be obtained at will. This aptitude is closely associated with body control, and it has been observed that athletes, dancers, actors, and others with well-trained bodies can learn to relax more readily than can those who are untrained.

It is advisable to work first with the larger muscle groups over which we have better control, such as those of the arms, legs and shoulders. Gradually the tension can be released from smaller, more delicate muscles, such as those around the eyes, besides those lying in deeper layers. Certain ones can be reached indirectly. Since the action of the skeletal muscles can be controlled by the mind, and because thoughts tend to be expressed in movement, release of tension can occur through mental concepts or visual images which cause the right kind of stimulus to be sent to the nerve endings; for example, thinking of the body as a rag doll or an empty sack may help to cause deep-lying muscles to let go.

Exercises for helping to induce relaxation can be

found at the end of this chapter.

BODY ALIGNMENT

We have discussed the three different types of exercises which are essential for maintaining a healthy, efficient instrument of action. Emphasis has been placed upon the muscles as being the activating agents. The muscles, however, are useful only as a means of moving

the bony framework of the body. Therefore, to appreciate fully the purpose and value of the exercises, it is necessary to have a mental concept of how the muscles act, together with the general relationship of the main skeletal sections.

When the segments of the body are unbalanced and out of line, ligaments and muscles are kept under constant tension, which causes unnecessary fatigue. On the other hand, a properly poised body is comfortably held erect with muscles in easy contraction, avoiding the waste of nerve energy.



"The old school of stiff attention... is outmoded."

The old school of stiff attention with knees locked, chest pushed out like a pouter-pigeon, and shoulders forced back, is outmoded. Rather we should strive for proper alignment of the various sections; for the perfect balance of opposing muscles and forces without putting undue strain on any one part.

Moving and controlling the body is based upon principles of mechanics. It is a question of joint articulation and efficient use of the muscles which produce the

movement. Therefore, in symmetrically lining up the body, let us consider how the bones are joined and their relationship to opposing parts.

The Foot and Ankle

Hundreds of times a day the entire weight of the body comes down heavily on a group of twenty-six small, intricately arranged bones. It is little wonder that dozens of ailments arise from mistreatment of the feet and ankles; for example, tight shoes that do not allow the toes to spread and thus absorb the body weight; little or no support for arches that were not meant for unyielding pavement; improper distribution of weight that puts a tremendous strain on muscles and ligaments that are not constructed to carry such loads.

The resulting pressure on the nerves may result in severe pain, not only in the region affected, but also in other parts of the body, because pain is often "referred"—that is, it travels along the nerve. Pains in the knee, groin, or pelvic region are often the result of mistreatment of the feet.

Correct use of the feet cannot be overemphasized when it is realized that at least 80 percent of the school children have foot trouble of one kind or another. Doctors state that a considerable percentage of these disorders could be eliminated by improved posture habits and the right kind of footwear. When the child becomes an adult he must pay for the negligence of those responsible during his younger years. The army records show that improvement does not necessarily come with increased years unless early corrective measures are taken.

The principles that apply to good posture and carriage are equally applicable to ballroom dancing. When standing, distribute your weight evenly between the heels and balls of the feet so that it is centered directly over the main longitudinal arch. In this position either the heels or the toes can be lifted without any appreciable change of posture. For good health and economy of movement when walking, point the toes directly forward so that the weight will roll along the outer border of the foot from the heel to the toes. Not only does this tend to strengthen the muscles that support the arch, but it also gives a slenderizing effect to the foot and ankle. When you are not moving, the inelastic ligaments should bear the strain, and thus relieve the muscles of unnecessary tension. When walking, the foot is supported by muscles which will be strengthened if allowed to function normally.

Exercises for strengthening the muscles of the foot, ankle, and lower leg will be found in Group I. The same exercises will also give greater suppleness to the anklejoint.

The Knee

The knee-joint is the largest in the body. The control of this articulation determines to a great extent the smoothness of your walk and dance-walk. As you move, the knee and foot should remain in the same plane. That is, the knee should bend directly over the toe. The tendency is to allow the knees to rotate inward, which throws the weight against the inner side of the foot instead of its being carried along the longitudinal axis. That is one of the causes of "weak foot" in which the overstretched muscles tend to give way. The muscles and ligaments are weakened instead of being strengthened.

Thus when a person walks or does the dance-walk with the toes turned out, either the knee must follow the direction of the toe, causing an awkward spread at the knees, or be permitted to rotate inward, which tends to strain the arches and hip joints. This has no reference to certain forms of the classical dance in which the entire leg is rotated outward from the hip-joint. This latter position is seldom used for continued forward progression, however.

Do not stand with the knees forced back in a locked position, since it automatically pushes the hips back by tilting the pelvis. Besides putting unnecessary tension on the ligaments and tendons at the back of the knee, this position tends to increase the curve in the small of the back and to disarrange the alignment of the body. Keep the knees in easy flexion without actually bending them; straight but not stiff. This centered position of the joint between being locked and bent is called by the author "keeping the knees in neutral."

Exercises for strengthening and developing control of this joint will be found in Group II.

The Hip

The next and perhaps most important joint in regard to dancing is the hip articulation which unites the thighbone and the pelvis. This ball-and-socket joint allows greater freedom of movement than does any other with the exception of the shoulder. But if you do not actively use this articulation and keep the surrounding tissues pliable and elastic, it will soon lose its flexibility and become set in a comparatively small radius of movement.

Since practically all walking and ballroom dance steps require active use of the hip-joint for gracefulness and freedom of movement, the importance of having strength and mobility in this joint cannot be overemphasized. Exercises to keep the controlling muscles strong and supple should be done for a few minutes each day. Several will be found in Group III.

The Pelvis

In connection with the hip-joint let us discuss that part of the body vaguely referred to as "the hips." To be more specific this section will be called the pelvis. The position or angle of the pelvis in relation to the rest of the body is one of the controlling factors in good posture. If the pelvis is off-center, the rest of the body will automatically be thrown out of line as a means of compensation to maintain balance. Also, leveling the pelvis under the upper body will apparently remove a number of pounds from this area by presenting a slimming silhouette.

To understand the relationship of the pelvis to the rest of the body, it is necessary to examine the underlying frame-work. The hip-bones which form the pelvic girdle are joined to the thigh-bones somewhat forward of the center line of the body, and to the spinal column at the rear where the two halves are welded together

by the sacrum.

The pelvic girdle by itself is immovable. Its movements are determined by action of the joints which connect the pelvic girdle both to the upper body and to the legs. Thus lateral or sideward tilting movements of the pelvis depend upon flexibility of the lower section of the spine where it joins the sacrum. Forward and backward movements are produced by a slight rotation or rocking motion at the thigh-joints controlled by the lower abdominal, pelvic, and lower back muscles.

Our object in regard to good posture and body balance is to be able to keep the pelvis directly under the chest section and well controlled as good body mechanics dictate. This serves several important purposes. It centers this section in a pivotal position for greater efficiency. It brings into use balancing sets of muscles, thus strength-

ening the back on the one hand and keeping the abdominal muscles firm and flat on the other. At the same time, the leveled position of the pelvis eliminates the overcurved or hollow-back condition which is so prevalent and leads to many other postural defects.

You will notice that when the buttocks are allowed to protrude, the abdominal muscles tend to become stretched and lengthened because the front of the pelvis is tilted downward. The continual stretching of these muscles robs them of their elasticity and prevents them from properly supporting the organs of the abdomen. Since fat tends to collect where muscles are least active, the abdomen may soon become more prominent than ever, thus putting additional strain on the sagging muscles. If no corrective measures are taken, it means that joints, ligaments and muscles will gradually become set in these strained, awkward, energy-consuming positions.

If considerable stress has been put on this section of the body, it is because you cannot expect to stand, sit, walk, or dance easily and gracefully without control of the muscles about the hips, waist, and abdomen. Exercises for this section will be found in Group IV.

The Chest and Shoulders

While both ballroom dancing and walking emphasize the use of muscles from the waist down, for proper alignment and balance it is equally important that the upper body be held correctly. After leveling the pelvis, try to balance the chest section directly above it. Avoid a sway-back position in which the rib section is tilted backward in relation to the pelvis. Also be careful not to allow the chest and shoulders to slump, causing the abdomen to protrude. Carry the chest well forward, but don't force it out like a strutting gamecock, as that

merely puts additional strain on the muscles besides

throwing the body segments out of balance.

Some bones sit while others hang. For example, the head sits on the spine while the spinal column sits on the sacrum. But the ribs and shoulder-girdle hang from the spine. Therefore, any effort made to lift these sus-

pended bones merely results in wasted energy.

While the shoulder-girdle has no direct bony connection with the spine, its movements are closely associated with it through various muscular attachments. If the shoulders are allowed to slump forward, the upper spinal section is pulled along with them. But forcing the shoulders back does more harm than good. Since the clavicle or collar-bone is attached medially to the sternum, any backward movement of the shoulders tends to put a strain on this articulation. Rather the shoulders should be carried free and wide; neither forced back nor allowed to droop forward. Avoid any tendency to hunch them. Just let them hang easily like a yoke as you keep your neck long and carry the head tall. Exercises for the shoulders, neck, and arms will be found in Group V.

The Head

The head is a rather heavy object, about one-tenth of the body weight, that should be carefully balanced on top of the spinal column. The point of contact with the first vertebra, appropriately named the "Atlas," is about in line with the lobe of the ear. It is balanced and moved by an intricate arrangement of guy-wires in the form of muscles and ligaments. Part of our energy must be used to offset the force of gravity which continually tends to pull us off balance. If we become too lax and allow these controlling muscles to become weakened or to lose their tonicity, like a tired work horse without a check rein, the head is apt to droop forward, pulling the shoulders and spine with it.

The carriage of the head has a pronounced physical influence upon the rest of the body. Movements of the body tend to follow movements of the head. For that reason the golfer is told to keep his head motionless during the swing. The acrobat starts a revolution of his body in the air by a movement of the head in the direction of the turn. By centering the head directly over the chest section so that the lobe of the ear is in line with the outer tip of the shoulder, the rest of the body is more apt to remain in good alignment. That is the purpose of walking about the room with an object balanced on the head. But before trying it be sure that you have properly aligned the body from the ankles up.

Aside from the physical advantages another important argument in favor of a head and neck well set upon the shoulders, is its psychological effect upon others. It generates a feeling of confidence. The spoken word is given additional force when backed by a positive attitude of the body. We expect a negative posture on the part of a panhandler, since a military bearing would be inconsistent with his manner of approach. But the legitimate salesman carries his head and neck squarely in line with the rest of his body, making it easier to meet your eyes. Also, as previously noted, attitudes of the body have a definite influence upon our own emotions. It is probable that the sense of confidence that a well-balanced head and body promotes in others is but a reflection of an inner feeling of assurance generated within ourselves.

The Spinal Column

Thus far we have discussed the importance of keeping balanced the three main sections of the body—pelvis,

chest and head—one directly above the other. Stress has been placed upon the necessity for flexibility and control of the three important joints used in walking and in the dance-walk: namely, the ankle, knee and hip. But while in ballroom dancing the legs are more active than is the upper body, the latter must likewise be kept strong, supple, and relaxed. One doesn't dance in segments. The entire body must be treated as a unit, with movements of each part harmonizing with every other part.

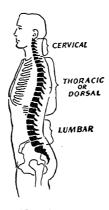


Fig. 2

"This flexible chain of bones is marvelously adaptable . . ."

Therefore, no discussion of body control would be complete without a general picture of the structure and function of the spinal column. This remarkable chain of twenty-four bones, exclusive of the sacrum and coccyx, bound together by ligaments and muscles, adjusts itself to our every movement and attitude. Through its center passes the life-line of the body, the spinal cord, from which pairs of nerves branch off at the side of each vertebra. These nerves subdivide innumerable times until they reach every section of our anatomy. While this flexible chain of bones is marvelously adaptable and can withstand a tremendous amount of punishment, after

a long period of mistreatment it is not surprising that one complains of aches and pains in some distant part of the body.

For purpose of study the spinal column is divided into three sections. Let us begin at the top with the cervical or first seven vertebræ. When viewed in profile these present a shallow inward curve. It is called by physiologists a secondary or compensating curve because it develops after birth from the weight of the skull as the infant learns to sit upright.

The seventh cervical vertebra remains stationary when the head is moved. It can easily be recognized by its prominence as the head is bent forward. If the head is habitually allowed to droop, the spinous projection of this "vertebra promens," as it is called, may eventually collect a protective layer of fat popularly known as the "dowager's hump." By carrying the head tall and well back with the chin parallel with the floor, you can keep this area flattened.

The next twelve vertebræ comprise the dorsal or thoracic group and present a gentle outward curve. The thoracic, as well as the sacral section, is known technically as a primary curve because it is developed before birth. The two are also called accommodation curves because they help to increase the size of the chest and pelvic cavities respectively.

A pair of ribs are attached to each of these vertebræ. Since the action of the ribs in conjunction with the diaphragm determines largely the efficiency of our breathing, it is most important that these twelve thoracic vertebræ be held in proper relationship to the other twelve.

The lower five bones of the flexible part of the spinal column comprise the lumbar section and form a shallow inward curve in relation to the buttocks. The last vertebra rests on the sacrum which is the keystone and rear wall of the pelvic girdle. Like the cervical curve, which it balances, the lumbar is also a secondary or compensatory curve. It develops from the weight of the body as the child begins to walk.

Our purpose is to be able to control the position and movements of this flexible column, and to regulate to a certain extent the amount of curve in each of the three sections; also to provide a suitable base for the lower end while balancing the head easily on its upper end.

The amount of curve in the sacral section, which serves to oppose the inward lumbar curve and to balance the outward curve of the thoracic section, cannot be altered, as these bones become fused early in life. However, movements of the pelvis as a unit have compensatory effects upon the other spinal curves.

An easy way of checking up on your body alignment and determining which sections need adjustment is to stand with your back against a flat wall. Be sure that the heels, hips, shoulders, and head are touching it. If you find it difficult to bring the shoulders and head against the wall, it indicates that there is too much outward curve in the thoracic or rib section. In other words, you tend to have a drooping head which may eventually lead to "round shoulders."

Next, observe the amount of space between the wall and the small of your back or lumbar section. The degree of this inward curve varies widely with different individuals, so that it is difficult to state just what is normal or even average. However, the amount of curve can be regulated to a certain extent by controlling the position of the pelvis in relation to the rest of the body. If the knees are stiffened and the buttocks allowed to jut out in the rear like a rumble seat, the lumbar curve most likely will be too pronounced and you will have what is known as "hollow-back."

In order to correct this overcurved tendency, which

many persons have to a greater or less extent, try this exercise: Stand a few inches away from the wall and then sit back against it by partially bending the knees. In this half-sitting position pull in strongly with the lower abdominal muscles, thus leveling the pelvis and bringing it under the upper body. At the same time, press the small of the back firmly against the wall. If now the head and shoulders are forced back, the curves of the spinal column will be straightened out from the neck to the base of the spine. As you press the spinous







Fig. 3B

"Press the small of the back "Only your toes and chest firmly against the wall." should touch the wall." firmly against the wall."

processes against the wall, try to sense which muscles are being contracted to produce the result. Body control depends upon your ability to tense or relax related sets of muscles at will.

After practicing this exercise a number of times with the wall as a support, try the same movements away from it, preferably standing sideways before a mirror. As you slowly bend the knees in a partial sitting position, pull in and upward with the lower abdominal muscles. At the same time squeeze together the strong gluteal muscles of the buttocks. Although a muscle can

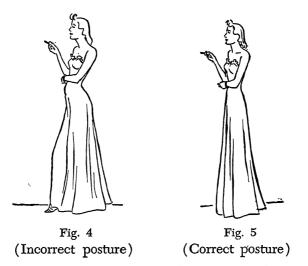
only pull, by contracting these big sitting muscles you may get the sensation of pushing or rotating the pelvis under the body. The ones that do most of the actual work are deep-lying pelvic muscles. As you concentrate upon control of the abdominal muscles and movements of the pelvis, avoid letting the chest section either tilt backward or slump forward. Carry the head and chest

in easy balance directly over the pelvis.

Another excellent means of determining proper body alignment is to stand facing a wall with your toes touching it. In this position sway forward until your chest touches the wall. That is, your chest should be the only part of your upper body to touch the wall-not your nose nor your abdomen. If your nose touches first, you are probably carrying your head too far forward, and perhaps are getting round-shouldered. If your abdomen instead of your chest touches the wall, either you have too much of the former, or you are standing in a sway-back position.

To summarize, stand with your weight centered directly over the main arch of the foot, evenly divided between the balls and the heels. Keep the knees in easy flexion, thus avoiding a strain on the ligaments and tendons at the back of the knee. Center the pelvis under the upper body by keeping the abdominal and pelvic muscles firm and in good tone. Balance the chest section well forward directly over the hips. Let the shoulders hang free and wide. Stretch the back of your neck long. Balance the head directly over the chest with the neck pressed back against either a real or an imaginary collar, and the chin parallel with the floor. Carry yourself tall.

Remember that good posture and carriage depend upon the alignment and control of the body as a whole; the correct relationship of one section to each of the others. Remember, too, that much of your efforts toward posture improvement can be nullified by slovenly habits of sitting; especially if your work requires you to spend considerable time at a desk. The general principles of body alignment apply as well to sitting as to standing. The only difference is the resulting break at the hips and knees, thus forming two right angles. But the balance, the pelvis, chest and head, one directly above the



"Good posture and carriage depend upon the alignment and control of the body as a whole."

other, remains the same. As you sit down, force the hips against the back of a chair so that your weight rests on the well-padded pelvic bones instead of the unprotected spine. Do not break in the middle like a half-empty sack, thus cramping your lungs and breathing apparatus. Rather, bend forward as a unit from the hip-joints. Also try to find a chair that enables you to keep your feet firmly on the floor, but without causing the thighs to be lifted from the chair bottom.

If you have been walking, standing and sitting with slumped shoulders, a sway-back, fallen abdomen, or

hollow-back for a number of years, do not expect to emulate a graduate of West Point at the end of a week. Unused muscles must be revitalized and trained, joints made limber, surplus flesh redistributed. But steady application over a period of weeks or months can do wonders and will amply repay you with big dividends in better health, longer life, and improved appearance.

EXERCISES FOR BODY CONTROL

The following exercises were chosen for the purpose of bringing into use all the important muscle groups of the body. For convenience they are grouped according to different sections, but it is not necessary to practice them in the order given.

Because individuals differ greatly in suppleness, body condition, and stamina, no specific number of times for doing each exercise is indicated. If you are unaccustomed to strenuous forms of activity, begin slowly, and as your muscles become stronger and more supple, gradually increase the number of times for each exercise.

Unless you are trying to increase your stamina or to reduce by burning up excess fat, there is no advantage in working to the point of fatigue. In fact, working slowly with careful attention to the muscles and joints involved and the effect produced, will give more beneficial and lasting results.

While certain of these exercises are used by the author to accompany class instruction in ballroom dancing, it is preferable to do them when costumed to permit full freedom of movement. For the feet either wear sandals or go barefoot.

When doing exercises that require you to keep your weight on one leg, hold to the back of a chair or some other object for support. Otherwise, considerable energy is spent in keeping balance. Always work with the leg that is farther from the object of support.

Group I-The Foot and Ankle

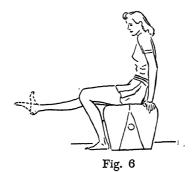
Exercise 1

Object: To strengthen the muscles of the foot, ankle, and lower leg.

Stand with the body in correct alignment, with hands on hips. Carry your weight forward over the balls of the feet. Slowly pull yourself upward to your toes and then gradually lower the heels. Repeat a number of times. The exercise can be varied by turning the heels outward as you rise on the toes.

Exercise 2

Object: To strengthen the muscles that support the arches of the foot; to develop suppleness and control of the foot and ankle.



A sitting position is more convenient, but if standing, hold to some object for support. Lift the right foot off the floor and forcibly stretch the toes down and under. Then bend the foot up as far as possible while pushing with the heel. Repeat several times.

Now add an inward rotation of the foot as follows: Point the toes down, bend the foot inward, and then pull the toes up. The foot describes an inward circle without movement of the leg. Practice with the left.

Exercise 3

Object: To strengthen the muscles of the lower leg and foot; to give suppleness to the joints at the ankle and knee.

Spring lightly up and down on the balls of the feet. It is not necessary to completely leave the floor. Rather stress the flexibility of the ankles and knees as you lower the heels. This bouncing movement is an excellent preparation for the samba.

Group II-The Knee

Exercise 1

Object: To strengthen the muscles that control the knee-joint; to give greater mobility to this joint.

Hold to some object for support until you acquire good balance. Stand with heels together and toes turned out. Lower yourself slowly until you can sit on your heels which rise off the floor as you bend the knees. Keep the back straight. Force the knees apart so that they remain bent directly in line with the toes.

As you rise, feel as if you were being pulled up like a puppet with a string attached to the top of your head. Practice only a few times at first, and gradually increase the number as your leg muscles become stronger.

Exercise 2

Object: To strengthen the thigh muscles; to give strength and mobility to the knee-joint; to stretch the Achilles tendon at the back of the heel.

Stand with toes turned out and heels twelve to fifteen inches apart. Slowly bend the knees while keeping the back straight and hips tucked under. Instead of lifting



Fig. 7

the heels, as in Exercise 1, keep the feet flat on the floor. Force the knees wide apart as you bend them, and lower the body as far as possible without lifting the heels.

Exercise 3

Object: To keep supple the muscles controlling the knee-joint.

Lift the right knee until the thigh forms a right angle with the body. With the toes pointed down describe a large circle with the lower leg. Try to keep the knee in the same position. First circle the leg outward a number of times, then reverse the movement. Practice with the left.

Group III—The Hip Joint

Exercise 1

Object: To give greater mobility to the hip-joint; to strengthen the lower abdominal muscles.

Stand on the left foot. Forcibly lift the right knee while stretching the toes down. Try to bring the knee up to the shoulder, but don't cheat by bending forward



Fig. 8

at the waist. Keep the body in good alignment. Repeat a number of times and then practice with the left.

Exercise 2

Object: Same as Exercise 1.

The only difference between this exercise and the one above is the turning of the knee outward so that it is lifted directly to the side instead of forward. While keeping the body balanced and tall bring the knee up as high as possible back of the arm.

Exercises 1 and 2 can be combined as follows: Lift the right knee forward (count 1); turn the knee to the side as you bring the right arm forward (count 2); lower

foot to starting position (count 3).

Both exercises can be done as kicking movements by keeping the leg fully extended as you swing it either forward or sideways.

To give greater mobility to the hip-joint, a more forcible stretching exercise can be done as follows: Place

the foot on a chair or object of similar height and lean from the hip against the flexed knee. In Exercise 1 press directly forward without breaking at the waist. In Exercise 2 turn the body sideways and rotate the knee outward. As you lean against the flexed knee, it should come back of the arm.

Exercise 3

Object: Same as above.

While standing on the left foot, swing the right leg forward and backward like a pendulum. Without deranging the upper body, stretch the swinging leg from the hip as if trying to touch the wall with your toes. When it is done as a ballet exercise, this movement is called "cloche," the leg representing the clapper of a bell. Practice with the left.

Group IV-The Pelvis, Waist and Abdomen

Exercise 1

Object: To slenderize the waist; to make the muscles more supple; to increase mobility of the spine.



Fig. 9

Stand with the body in good alignment, with the feet several inches apart. Clasp the fingers of the left hand with those of the right and stretch the arms overhead. Without bringing the head forward, your upper arms should be over the ears. Bend directly to the right side with a long, slow pull. Straighten and repeat to the left. Pulling the arm overhead with clasped fingers enables you to give a more forcible stretch. Use as much pressure as desired. In case of any recent abdominal operations these stretching exercises should be omitted.

Exercise 2

Object: Same as Exercise 1

Point the right toe obliquely forward. While keeping the arms stretched overhead, bend diagonally forward instead of sideways. You should feel a strong pull on the muscles halfway between your back and left side. Straighten and repeat a few times. Reverse the exercise by extending the left leg to the corner and bending toward it.

Exercise 3

Object: Same as above.

If you must limit yourself to only a few exercises, it is advisable to choose those which describe circular movements, as they combine all directions in the same exercise. For example, the following exercise brings into play all the muscles about the waist.

Stand with the feet separated, hands on hips. Bend slowly to the right, then forward, to the left and backward, making a complete circle with the upper body. Try to lengthen the space between the lower ribs and the top of the hip-bones by a continual upward stretch as you rotate the body.

After circling a number of times to the left, reverse to the right. The same exercise can be done with the arms stretched overhead.

Exercise 4

Object: Same as above.



Fig. 10

Sit on the floor with the legs forming a V. Pull the upper body out of the hips, but keep the shoulders down. With hands at chest level and elbows pointing directly to the sides, twist the body vigorously both to the right and to the left. Try to see the back wall.

This exercise can also be done standing, but avoid letting the hips turn with the shoulders as that would eliminate the twisting action at the waist.

Exercise 5

Object: To extend the spine and thus correct a tendency toward overcurvature of the thoracic and lumbar areas.

Stand with the feet a few inches apart, hands on hips. Stretch yourself tall and then slowly bend forward from the hip-joints with the head and chest raised until your upper body forms a right angle with the legs. In this position the spine should be straight and parallel to the floor. Return to starting position and relax.

A variation of this exercise can be done as follows: Stand with your hands clasped behind in the small of your back. Bend over as far as possible, allowing the back to become rounded. Then while pressing down with the hands in the lumbar section, slowly raise the head and chest until your spine forms a horizontal line. As you bend forward, the lumbar curve is flattened, and by lifting the chest you straighten the area between the shoulder-blades. Return to starting position, relax, and repeat.

Exercise 6

Object: To slenderize the hips and waist; to strengthen the abdominal muscles.



Fig. 11

Lie on your back with arms extended sideways. Lift the right leg and cross it over toward the outstretched left arm. Try to touch the right toe to the left hand. The hips may roll with the leg, but keep the arms and shouldders flat on the floor. Return to starting position and repeat with the left.

If it is done many times daily with a strong stretching movement, this is an excellent exercise for slimming the waist and hips.

Exercise 7

Object: To strengthen the abdominal muscles.

Lie on your back with arms at your sides. Slowly lift the right leg with toes pointed. At the same time pull in strongly with the abdominal muscles, letting the lumbar section of the spine sink to the floor. Lower the leg slowly and repeat with the left.

The important abdominal muscles can be made to contract much more forcibly by lifting both legs together to the overhead position.

Exercise 8

Object: Same as above.

From the same supine position raise the body to a sitting position. As you return, curve your back and let the spine roll down like a caterpillar tread. In order to keep the body correctly aligned as you rise to the sitting position, obtain additional leverage by hooking your toes under a heavy piece of furniture.

Exercise 9

Object: To strengthen the muscles of the back and abdomen; to slenderize the hips and thighs.



Fig. 12

Lie on your right side with the body fully extended. Try to keep the same alignment as when standing. Stretch the right arm directly overhead while you place the left hand on the floor in front of the chest to help maintain balance. Without deranging the upper body, swing the right leg forward and the left one back, then reverse. Repeat this scissors movement rapidly and with considerable force. Its effectiveness is aided by a strong downward stretching of the toes. Turn on the left side and repeat.

Exercise 10

Object: To give suppleness to the waist muscles.

Stand with the feet about twelve inches apart, and keep the knees slightly flexed. Without moving the upper body force the hips to the right side. Then push them to the left. Avoid locking the knees, as that tends to force the hips backward. This is an excellent foundation exercise for the rumba and conga.

Group V-The Shoulders, Neck, and Arms

Exercise 1

Object: To give greater freedom of movement to the shoulder-girdle.



Fig. 13

Stand with your arms relaxed. Slowly lift the shoulders forward and upward. At the same time lower the chest

as if the rib cage were collapsing. The object is to lift the shoulder-girdle away from the ribs. From this forward and raised position, force the shoulders back and down, making a complete circle. Avoid letting the head droop forward. Repeat until you feel complete freedom of movement in this section.

Exercise 2

Object: To slenderize the upper arm and shoulder; to give greater mobility to the shoulder-joint.

Extend the arms sideways at shoulder level, with the index fingers pointed to give added tension. Describe small, backward circles with the pointing fingers while keeping the arm muscles tense. Gradually increase the size of the circles until they become full arm swings.

Exercise 3

Object: To keep the neck muscles strong and supple; to give full mobility to the cervical section of the spine.

Drop the head forward until the chin rests on the chest. You should feel a stretching of the muscles along the back of the neck. Raise the head and tilt it backward as far as possible. At the same time jut the lower jaw forward, which tenses the muscles of the throat. Keeping these muscles in good tone will help to prevent the addition of that extra chin.

By clasping hands back of the head and resisting against their pressure as you move it, the neck muscles can be greatly strengthened.

Exercise 4

Object: Same as above.

Tilt the head sideways to the right. This stretches the muscles on the left side of the neck. Repeat to the left.

Exercise 5

Object: Same as above,

While keeping the chin parallel with the floor, turn your head sideways to your right so that you are looking back over your right shoulder. Do not tilt the head, but rather press sideways with the chin. Repeat to the left.

Group VI-General

It is difficult to specify any particular section of the body for certain exercises. The following group is excellent for general body conditioning.

Exercise 1

Object: To increase suppleness, to improve circulation, to ease muscle tension by stretching the entire body.

Lie on your back with arms extended overhead on the floor. Stretch with the right arm and push with the right heel at the same time. That is, elongate the body with a two-way stretch. Be careful to keep the body in the proper alignment. Avoid a sidebending at the waist. Stretch the other side in the same manner.

Next try a diagonal stretch with the right arm and left heel; then reverse.

Finally, stretch both arms up and both heels down simultaneously. Stretch slowly and relax after each exercise.

Exercise 2

Object: To normalize the position of the organs of the body; to bring into play muscles of the shoulders, back, abdomen and legs.

This exercise is simply a return to the creeping stage of our babyhood. While on hands and knees creep about the room with long, slow, gliding movements like a cat stalking its prey. Do not let the hips wobble from side to side.

As a variation of this exercise, try walking on your hands and feet.

Exercise 3

Object: To give suppleness and mobility to the entire spine; to strengthen muscles of the arms, shoulders, back and abdomen.



Fig. 14A

Assume a position on hands and knees with the thighs forming right angles to the body, and hands directly under the shoulders. Now lower the chest almost to the floor by bending the elbows. With the chin nearly scrap-



Fig. 14B

ing the floor, pull the hips backward until you are sitting on your heels. Since your hands remain in place throughout the exercise, your arms are stretched and continue the long, low sweeping curve of the back. From this position slowly lift the hips and arch your back like a cat as you pull in and upward with the abdominal muscles.



Fig. 14C

Let the head drop downward. Return to your original starting position and repeat.

Exercise 4

Object: To improve the general body condition by developing correct habits of breathing.

An adequate discussion of this subject would easily fill a volume, yet how few there are who have more than a perfunctory knowledge of how our respiratory apparatus functions. Efficient breathing is closely allied with good body mechanics. Restrictions, inhibitions, and bad posture habits adversely affect our manner of breathing; while carrying the body in good alignment enables us to use our ribs, lungs, and diaphragm as nature had planned.

More rapid improvement can be made if we first understand the mechanics of breathing. While the actual exchange of gases takes place through the walls of the air sacs in the lungs, our main interest lies in the muscular action that forces the used air out and lets the fresh

air in.

The most important factor in this process is the diaphragm. This is a strong, dome-shaped muscle which separates the thoracic and abdominal cavities. Filling most of the space above it are the heart and lungs. Below the diaphragm lay the stomach, liver, spleen, and other abdominal organs.

As the lungs fill with air, the thoracic cavity must expand. Part of the increase in space is taken care of by the rib cage. As you inhale, the ribs, which form a cylindrical enclosure, are raised and rotated outward. But the line of least resistance is downward. If muscles co-ordinate correctly as you breathe in, the flexible floor of this thoracic cylinder will be flattened down against the abdominal organs with a beneficial massaging effect. This downward movement of the diaphragm can be felt indirectly by an outward expansion of the abdominal wall together with a slight flattening of the lumbar curve.

As air is expelled from the lungs, the diaphragm automatically relaxes and moves upward to its original position. At the same time the ribs close in like a pair of bellows and the abdominal wall recedes. In normal breathing these movements are barely perceptible, but after strenuous exertion the action may be very pronounced.

This exaggerated muscular action can be simulated with what is called the "panting exercise." Place your hands at your sides on the lower ribs in order to observe the rib action; then pant heavily a few times as if you had just run a hundred-yard dash. The ribs should be forced outward with each inhalation. Now place one hand on the abdomen and the other at the small of your back. Repeat the panting exercises. You should again feel your hands being pushed apart as you inhale while the resulting relaxation of the diaphragm, as air is forced out, causes the abdominal wall to move inward. Avoid overdoing the panting exercise, as the excess oxygen may cause a temporary feeling of dizziness.

Slow, controlled breathing exercises should also be practiced. To observe the results place one hand at your side and the other on your upper abdomen. Take a deep breath and then slowly force the air out between the tongue and teeth with a loud hissing sound. Visualize the diaphragm as gradually rising and squeezing the air out of the lungs. At the same time you should feel the ribs and abdominal wall slowly contracting. When you can no longer make even a tiny hiss, suddenly release your hands, relax all muscles, and let the air rush in through the nose and mouth. It is unnecessary to draw the air in. Just let yourself expand and the lungs will automatically be filled. Breathe quietly for a few moments and then repeat the exercise.

Instead of expelling the air with a hissing sound, purse your lips and blow it out in a soft, continuous stream. Practice until you can take thirty seconds for a complete exhalation.

Another breathing exercise can be done rhythmically as follows: Breathe in slowly while counting up to six; hold the breath for three counts; exhale for six counts; again hold for three counts. Regardless of the number of counts, the length of time the breath is held is always half the amount of time required for inhaling or exhaling. This exercise can be timed effectively with your walk.

Group VII—Exercises for Relaxation

Exercise 1

Object: To release tension in the foot and ankle.

Hold the right foot off the floor and shake the entire lower leg, using the thigh muscles. Let the foot flop about loosely. Imagine that you are kicking some mud off the bottom of your foot. Avoid jerking the knee-joint



Fig. 15

Do the same exercise with the left. This exercise should follow those in Group I.

Exercise 2

Object: To relax the leg muscles.

Stand on the left foot and lift the right knee forward. Allow the lower leg and foot to hang limply. Drop the leg heavily and allow it to swing backward in one continuous movement. At the same time turn the knee outward to give more freedom in the hip-joint. Again drop the leg and let it swing forward. Repeat this loose, pendulum-like swing of the leg, using a minimum of effort. Allow the ball of the foot to strike the floor as you release the leg muscles. Practice with the left.

Exercise 3

Object: Same as Exercise 2.

Lie on your back on a bed or cushion. Lift the right leg a few inches and hold it in that position until the muscles begin to tire. Then let it drop heavily with a complete release of tension. Repeat with the left.

Exercise 4

Object: To relax the wrist and hands.

Shake the entire lower arm, letting the hands flop loosely from the wrists as if they were lifeless. If you first make a tightly clenched fist, the normal reaction will emphasize the relaxation.

Exercise 5

Object: To relax the arms.

From either a standing or lying position, slowly lift the right arm and hand overhead as if it were a heavy weight. Then suddenly devitalize the muscles and allow the arm to drop limply to the side. If you are lying down, be sure that the arm falls on a soft cushion. Practice with the left.

Exercise 6

Object: To relax the muscles of the head and neck.

As in Exercise 3, lie on your back, lift your head a couple inches from the pillow, and when the muscles

begin to tire let the head drop heavily.

The muscles can also be relaxed as follows: In either a sitting or standing position first close the eyes with heavy lids. Drop the lower jaw by letting go of the ears. Then let the head drop forward. Slowly lift it until it passes the center of balance and topples over backward. From this position let it roll to the right, then forward, and to the left, making a complete circle in a lolling manner.

Exercise 7

Object: To relax the muscles which keep the upper body in an erect position.



Fig. 16

Stand with the feet about fifteen inches apart, and with the knees slightly flexed. Suddenly devitalize the entire body and allow it to topple over. Break in the knees to avoid falling, but do not hold back as your upper body collapses. Your arms and hands dangle loosely; perhaps touching the floor. Your head hangs limply with heavy eyelids and loose jaw.

In this rag-doll position sway the body to the right and left a few times to release all excess tension. Then slowly straighten the spine. Begin with the lowest vertebræ and pull them erect one by one. Let the head and shoulders droop to the very last. Finish with an upward stretch of the entire body.

Exercise 8

Object: To assume a position that puts the least effort and strain on the muscles and ligaments.

This is a passive exercise. In fact, it is merely a restful position. Lie flat on your back on a firm surface (not a soft bed) with the knees partly drawn up so that the soles of the feet rest flat on the floor. Drop the elbows at the sides and allow the forearm to fall into the most comfortable position, which most likely will be with the hands across the stomach. Drop the spine; let it melt into the floor. Make the curve at the back of the neck as

shallow as possible. Release the lower jaw by "letting go of the ears." Before you know it, you will be sound asleep!

The following poem, besides highlighting the main points regarding relaxation, may also serve as a reminder to "take it easy."

RELAX A BIT

If you travel throughout the day Too fast a pace at work or play, Relax a bit!

When tired out from endless hurry, When troubles cause you too much worry, Relax a bit!

When emotions get the upper hand, And nerves feel stretched like rubber bands, Relax a bit!

Jumpy nerves, you soon will find, Can be allayed with peace of mind.

And if fatigue has worn you down, Activity change will bring you 'round.

Conserve your energy—it will pay, Like money banked for a rainy day.

To aid in energy accumulation Sleep well—eat well—in moderation.

Exercise, fresh air, and rest Will help to give you pep and zest.

But if Nature fails or ill health you fear, Consult your Doctor once a year.

So treat your body like a friend As you must live with it 'till the end. Relax a bit!

The Art of Walking

Walk well to dance well. Just as singing has been defined as sustained speech, so we might say that ball-room dancing is stylized walking. To dance gracefully first learn to walk gracefully. All first-rate actors and actresses spend hours perfecting their posture and carriage as an essential part of their art. Sarah Bernhardt tells us in her autobiography that it required months of training before she felt capable of walking gracefully across the stage. If we insist upon correctness of posture and carriage by professional performers, why shouldn't we demand the same perfection of ourselves?

Of course, your manner of walking varies according to conditions. You would not walk across a ballroom in the same way that you hike cross-country. For the present discussion the analysis of walking will be confined to a normal gait on a smooth, level surface.

While we all use the same muscles and go through more or less the same mechanical pattern in walking, yet it is not necessary or even possible to become stereo-

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typed. Your walk reflects your character and personality. No two people walk exactly alike, even as no two dance alike. In fact, each of us walks differently at different times, depending upon such factors as whether we are feeling happy or depressed; wearing comfortable or uncomfortable shoes; whether the air is warm or cold; and so on.

Just as the successful actor can portray a character by little mannerisms of attitude and bearing, similarly you project your own character and personality by the way you stand and walk. And since bad habits of carriage acquired in ordinary walking are apt to be carried to the dance floor in an exaggerated form, check-up on your walk if you desire to look presentable when

dancing.

Are you one of the vast majority who walk with the toes pointed out, the left saying, "I want to go this way," the right, "I want to go that way"? Do you waddle like a duck as your weight is shifted laboriously from side to side? Do you let your knees and abdomen lead so that you land on your heels with a jarring thud with each step? Do you bend forward at the waist, dragging your posterior behind you? Do you stride along with your head thrust forward like a turtle with its neck stuck out of its shell? Do you walk with drooping head and spine as if you were Atlas carrying the world on your shoulders? Do you try to assume a buoyant attitude by lifting your heels forcibly with each step, thus wasting energy as you bounce along? These are a few of the more obvious faults in bad carriage. Are you guilty of any of them?

If your body is out of line and unbalanced when standing still, you cannot expect to move with ease and coordination when you walk. Therefore, before analyzing the correct forward walk, check again on your body alignment as described in the preceding chapter. View-

ing yourself profile in a mirror, you should find the ear-lobe, outer tip of the shoulder, center of the hip, knee, and arch of the foot all in one line.

When preparing to step forward there is one important variation from this position. That is the shifting of the weight forward to the balls of the feet until the heels can be lifted easily. Care must be taken that your body does not alter its position. Do not break at the



Fig. 17

"In walking, the moving leg is brought forward until it is practically even with the supporting leg by the time the weight has rolled to the ball of that foot." Compare with Fig. 18, page 64.

waist but sway with the entire body from the ankles. The soldier takes this subtle preparatory forward sway of the body during the slight pause between the two words in the command, "Forward—march!" Otherwise, on the word "march" he would be left flat-footed and returned to the "awkward squad." All forward or backward dance steps should likewise begin with this preliminary movement of the body before moving the feet. This enables you to step with a minimum of effort. It is

the difference between "light dancing" and "heavy

dancing."

As you sway forward with the entire body, swing the left leg forward from the hip, with the knee and ankle relaxed. The heel should meet the floor a comfortable distance in advance without any jarring of the body. A minimum-length step, measuring from the heel of the forward foot to the toe of the rear foot, is approximately

the length of your own shoe.

The following sequence of movements, as the weight is being transferred to the extended leg, determines the degree of smoothness, balance, and control that you have in your walking and dancing. First, the ankle gives as the weight rolls smoothly from the heel to the ball of the foot and toes. At the same time, the knee bends slightly. And finally, to complete the step, the hips sway inconspicuously to the left. Your ability to walk or dance gracefully depends largely upon your control over these three main joints—ankle, knee, and hip. The flow of movement from heel to hip must be a smooth, continuous, wave-like motion.

Walking or dancing smoothly—without bobbing up and down like a buoy in a rough sea, and without landing heavily on the heel—depends primarily on controlled hip, knee and ankle joints. Smooth, controlled movements require relaxed muscles. Therefore, as you swing the leg forward, let go of the muscles from the hip down. Just as the efficient swimmer must learn to relax between strokes, so must the graceful dancer or walker acquire the habit of relaxing between steps. Let your body carry

you forward.

The movement of the free swinging leg should be timed so as to catch the weight on the heel at the exact instant the leg is fully extended. Avoid leading with the knee, causing the leg to be extended before you are ready to transfer the weight to it. Perfect balance and

co-ordination in walking and dancing means that you are able to transfer your weight to the moving leg at the exact instant the foot is in position to receive it; neither allowing the weight to fall heavily on the extended leg nor anticipating too quickly with the moving foot.

Smoothness in walking depends upon a forward balance of the body co-ordinated with controlled action of the ankle, knee, and hip joints. Besides the forward balance of the body, however, we must consider also lateral or sideward balance. Since we have only two feet, with each step our weight must be balanced precariously over a small area of support. To obtain this balance without readjusting the entire body it is necessary to allow the hips to sway or tilt slightly toward the foot receiving the weight.

For example, when the weight is transferred to the right foot, the hip on the right side will be slightly raised, while the left hip will be correspondingly lowered. This lateral tilting movement of the pelvis can readily be observed by placing the fingers on the prominent hip-bones at the sides just below the ribs, and then shifting the weight from one foot to the other without moving the upper body. This is a natural movement but it should be practiced under conscious control.

The sideward shift of the hips brings the center of balance directly over the ball of the foot on which you are momentarily standing and enables you to complete the step without any sideward movement of the upper body. It is important, however, that when walking, the sway of the hip follow the bend of the knee. The sequence of movement must always be ankle, knee and hip. While this hip action seems more pronounced in the rumba, due partly to the fact that the rumba steps are taken very short, it is just as important in every other ballroom dance and in walking, however much the movement may be modified.

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You probably have observed the "side-bending" walker who becomes the "pump-handle" dancer on the ballroom floor. This ungainly shoulder swaying is due to the fact that the hips are allowed to tilt away from the supporting foot instead of toward it. Consequently, the balance of the body must be with the shoulders instead of the hips, causing a side-bend at the waist.

Another awkward manner of walking is the "waddle." This penguin paddle is caused by stepping on a wide base with the hips held stiffly, thus making two separate lines of tracks several inches apart; in order to balance the body over the foot with each successive step, the entire body must sway from side to side much in the manner of a stilt-walker. On the other hand, by bringing the feet in toward an imaginary center line, so that the inner edge of the sole borders it with each step, you will find that you can balance yourself easily with an inconspicuous sway of the hips toward the foot

As stated in the preceding chapter, the pelvic girdle by itself is immovable. If the spine were ankylosed or knitted together, the hips could not move. When the hips tilt laterally, the action takes place in the lower section of the spine. Therefore, to walk and dance gracefully it is necessary to keep this lumbar section supple and strong. Exercises for the hips and waist will be

found in Chapter I.

on which you are stepping.

CHAPTER III

The Dance-Walk

THE FORWARD DANCE-WALK

F you have learned to walk with a smooth easy swing, it is a comparatively simple matter to transform this movement into a forward dance-walk. Any difficulty is apt to be mental. When thinking of dancing one tends to visualize specialized movements. Either the person begins to slide the feet as if the polished hardwood called for a skating effect, or he rises high on the balls of the feet with the false assumption that by spurning the floor he can resist gravity. While the feet seldom slide in ballroom dancing, since sliding implies that there is weight on the moving feet, neither does raising the heels necessarily make for greater lightness. Dancing entirely on the balls of the feet requires a strong contraction of the muscles of the lower leg which soon becomes tiring. If indulged in over a long period, it may be injurious to the feet.

To change your normal walk as described in the preceding chapter into a forward dance-walk, only two important alterations are necessary. First, delay the

forward swing of the leg; and second, keep contact with the floor.

There are two reasons for delaying the step when moving forward. One is to avoid bumping your partner's knees. The other is to present attractive lines, to give an

illusion of dancing with straight knees.

Since you should dance practically toe to toe with your partner when in the closed position, naturally you cannot step forward until your partner has swung the corresponding leg backward. For example, if the man is to step forward with his left foot, the girl must first swing her right leg back out of the way. Of course, the man must indicate in advance the fact that he is about to step. As explained more fully in Chapter V, "How to Lead and Follow," this indication or lead is given with the upper body as the man sways forward from the ankles preliminary to stepping.

Besides avoiding knee interference, this delay of the forward swinging leg will at the same time give your body more attractive lines. It is one of the factors relating to "good style." It helps to give the impression of

dancing without bending the knees.

We come now to the second variation from the normal walk—keeping contact with the floor. Since it is necessary to lift the foot when stepping forward in ordinary walking, the result is a pronounced bend of the knee. In the dance-walk much of this knee-bending can be avoided simply by lowering the heel as you begin the step and allowing the entire flat surface of the foot to skim along the floor.

As the foot swings forward in pendulum fashion, its movement describes a flat arc. This arc can be divided roughly into three sections. For the first section of the arc the ball of the foot is in contact with the floor. During the middle section the entire bottom surface of the shoe glides along. Near the finish of the arc, the

toe begins to rise slightly so that contact with the floor is with the heel.

When swinging the leg forward, avoid making the step too short—the result of transferring weight to the foot before the leg is fully extended. It is these short, choppy, bent-kneed steps that are indicative of the mediocre dancer, often the self-satisfied individual who "never took a lesson in his life" and shows it.

The most difficult phase of the forward dance-walk is proper timing. While the rear foot remains in place as long as possible in order to give your partner an opportunity to step backward with the corresponding foot without bumping knees, nevertheless this rear foot must be swung forward quickly enough to catch the weight with the leg extended to prevent overbalancing. Thus the actual forward movement of the stepping leg is considerably faster than in ordinary walking. In walking, since there is no delay between succeeding steps, the moving leg is brought forward until it is practically even with the supporting leg by the time the weight has rolled to the ball of that foot. In dancing, the toe of the rear foot should remain glued in place, allowing this back leg to become fully extended while you feel the pressure of your weight on the ball of the momentarily supporting foot. Then, to make up for the time lost in delaying the step, the leg must be swung forward quickly, with the muscles and joints relaxed.

To swing the leg forward with a minimum of effort, first drop the heel as if it contained a heavy weight. Then release the ankle and knee joints, allowing gravity and the momentum of your forward motion to swing the leg through. While the legs might be said to move with a pulsating rhythm, the body at the same time should move forward at a steady, even tempo. This may not be so difficult when moving rapidly, but with a

slower dance-walk, as in the tango and slow fox-trot, it

requires unusual poise and skill.

To summarize, prepare for your forward step by breaking in the knees. By "breaking" in the knees is meant an easy flexion which does not lower the body but does avoid a "locked" position of the knees in which the joints are stiffened. When the knee joints are forced back in this manner, it not only tends to tilt the hips backward, but also throws the weight back onto the heels.



Fig. 18

"In dancing, the toe of the rear foot should remain glued in place, allowing this back leg to become fully extended while you feel the pressure of your weight on the ball of the momentarily supporting foot." Compare with Fig. 17, page 57.

Next sway forward from the ankles with the entire body until you almost overbalance. Then swing the left leg forward from the hip without lifting the foot from the floor. With slow walking steps-as in the tango and medium and slow fox-trots—the weight is received first on the heel and then allowed to roll easily to the ball of the foot. On certain quick steps, however, during which the weight rests on the foot for a shorter period,

the ankle is extended when stepping, permitting the weight to be transferred directly to the ball of the foot.

As the weight is being transferred to this forward foot, allow the knee to bend slightly as in walking. At the same time, the rear right leg completely straightens because the toe of that foot is left in place until the weight is felt over the ball of the supporting left foot. This right leg is then relaxed and swung forward with a minimum of knee action by the simple expedient of lowering the heel and allowing the entire flat surface of the foot to glide along the floor. Be sure that the leg is fully extended before it receives weight. Notice that the weight is poised for a fleeting instant between the heel of the forward foot and the ball of the rear foot before the step is completed.

Be careful to point the toes directly forward as in ordinary walking, with the weight rolling smoothly from the heel to the toes. The final pressure should be felt

against the big toe.

Keep the feet close to a single line by stepping with the knees almost brushing. As in walking, the control of your lateral balance in this unstable equilibrium is in the hips. Each step is completed by a slight sideward sway or tilting of the hip toward the foot receiving the weight. For example, if the weight is on your right foot, the hip should be slightly higher on that side.

Since many dancers still retain the old dance style of transferring weight directly to the ball of the foot when stepping forward, it may be well to discuss some of the reasons for this mode of dancing, and at the same time compare it with the more modern dance-walk in which the heel is used in a natural manner.

There are a number of reasons why a person may tend to step forward toe first instead of using the heel. It may be the fault of the teacher; for many instructors still carry over the mannerisms of the preceding generation with memories of the fast one-step and even the Castle Walk. They have failed to adapt themselves to the style of the modern tango, the slow and medium fox-trot. Other teachers may approach the subject from a background of classical dance training in which extension of

the ankle has become an ingrained habit.

Another reason is psychological. When we dance with someone in the closed position, toe to toe, there immediately arises in our mind anxiety concerning the safety of our partner's feet. In stepping forward, our natural tendency is to explore with the toe, with the idea that it is better merely to bump our partner's foot than actually to step on it. Instead of solving the problem, however, this manner of stepping tends to propagate numerous other faults.

The condition of the ballroom floor also may account for the tendency to step toe first. If a dance floor is too highly polished, it may be difficult or even dangerous to step forward on the heel. An instinctive safety-first sense will cause you to half slide on the balls of the feet like walking on smooth ice. The remedy for this is education of those responsible for the condition of the floor. Fortunately, the trend is toward less slippery dance surfaces on which a step can be taken with confidence and control.

Lastly, dancing entirely on the balls of the feet gives to the tyro a sense of lightness which can be achieved simply by lifting the heels. While this might be considered an easy short-cut to ballroom dancing, it fails to provide a foundation technic that is the keystone to further development.

Now that we have considered why many persons tend to step forward directly onto the ball of the foot, let us examine some of the disadvantages of this mode of dancing as compared to the dance-walk previously

described.

In the first place, this "toe dancing" requires an extension of the ankle which in turn tightens most of the muscles of the leg. Thus, instead of a free, natural forward swing of the leg, the movement becomes strained and constricted. As a result, the average dancer fails to follow through and usually finishes with a choppy, half-step.

Another result of pointing the toe downward is a pronounced tendency to slide—that is, the foot continues to move after it receives weight. Naturally, it is not a controlled step and often the dancer slides his foot against his partner's toe. While contact with the floor may be maintained in the dance-walk, yet the pressure on the floor is so light as to be barely noticeable; and there is no forward movement of the foot after he steps.

The main disadvantage of stepping directly onto the ball of the foot is the difficulty experienced in maintaining an even forward progression of the body. Since your weight is already on the forward part of the foot, the movement of the body tends to be partially checked until the other leg is swung forward. The result is a succession of wave-like movements instead of the desired continuous, steady flow. In order to counteract this uneven body motion, many dancers allow the foot to slide a few inches after stepping, as mentioned above.

On the other hand, by using the entire foot as in walking, you can transfer your weight gradually from the heel to the toe. During that period the body continues to move forward at an even tempo.

THE BACKWARD DANCE-WALK

The backward dance-walk is not a natural movement. It must be acquired. The natural tendency is to allow the body to move backward simultaneously with the movement of the leg. However, this would result in

throwing the weight back onto the heels, making it im-

possible to follow a partner.

The backward dance-walk is the forward walk in reverse. But in reversing the dance-walk one important fundamental difference should be noted. Whereas the forward movement results in a continuous state of unstable equilibrium—that is, the body precedes the movement of the legs—the backward walk can be at all times in a state of perfectly controlled balance. It is this factor which enables one to follow, as will be fully explained in the chapter on "How to Lead and Follow."

The backward step can be separated into two distinct movements. First, placing the foot back with a complete extension of the leg and ankle; and second, transferring the weight. When stepping backward you should be able to pause at any time, both before and during the actual change of weight to the rear foot; while in the forward walk the body travels with the step, so that the placing of the foot and the transference of weight are practically simultaneous.

Since we are not accustomed to stepping backward in

the manner of the dance-walk, it is necessary to train and strengthen certain muscles in order to maintain balance and smoothness. For that reason, the following

exercise is helpful:

Bend both knees slightly and then extend the right leg forward with the heel touching the floor. Now extend the same leg backward by lifting the knee and passing it through so that it brushes the supporting left leg. After touching the floor in back with the right toe, bring the same foot forward again to the original position with the heel again touching the floor. While repeating this exercise a number of times avoid any movement of the upper body. Be sure that the supporting left knee remains in a partially bent position to avoid any bobbing up and down of the body. Since there is a

natural tendency for the body to move with the leg when stepping backward, the purpose of the exercise is to isolate these two movements. The object of touching the heel forward is to instil the habit of beginning a backward step from the heel of the forward foot.

After placing the foot back as far as you can easily stretch with the big toe, you follow the same sequence of movements as for the forward walk. That is, while the weight is being transferred, the ankle gives to partially lower the heel, followed by a slight bend of the knee; and to complete the step, the hips are allowed to tilt toward this supporting foot for lateral balance.

As the weight is rolling to this rear foot, the forward leg straightens, after which the toe is allowed to rise slightly, so that momentarily the weight rests between the heel of the forward foot and the ball of the rear foot. Note that at this point the forward knee is perfectly straight while the rear knee is slightly bent. Before the rear heel touches the floor the forward leg should be swung backward by partially bending the knee and allowing the ball of the foot to graze the floor. At no time when stepping backward must there be any weight on the heel of the supporting foot until the moving foot is in place. In other words, keep the weight centered over the ball of the foot on which you are momentarily standing—that is, the forward foot.

Let us summarize this analysis of the backward dance-walk. Since the test of light dancing is the ability to lift the heel of the supporting foot at any time, you first sway forward from the ankles with the entire body until you feel the pressure of your weight on the balls of the feet. Now slightly bend the left knee and swing the right leg directly back as far as you can easily reach with the big toe—that is, extend not only the knee, but also the ankle. The extension of the ankle practically doubles the length of your step. Until the right leg is

fully stretched back, the weight must remain entirely on the ball of the left or supporting foot, although the

heel of this foot may rest on the floor.

For the second part of the step it is necessary merely to transfer the weight from the forward left to the rear right foot. As the right heel is partially lowered, the knee bends slightly, followed by an inconspicuous swaying or tilting of the hips to the right. Meanwhile, the forward left leg has straightened and the toe has been allowed to come off the floor in preparation for the next backward step. Just as the forward walk can be accelerated by a gentle push from the big toe, so the beginning of each backward step can be assisted by an easy push from the heel of the forward foot.

Note carefully that your posture is not altered when you change direction. The only difference is in the manner of stepping. When you move forward the body always leads. When you move backward the foot must

lead.

Your forward and backward dance-walk, besides being smooth and controlled, should also present attractive lines. The most predominant and effective line of the body is the long, sweeping curve extending unbrokenly from the back of the head to the heel. It requires no acrobatics or contortions of the body to obtain this graceful arabesque which is a mark of the accomplished dancer. It is simply a combination of correct body alignment and a backward extension of the leg. You should present this sweeping, curved line to the onlooker regardless of whether you are stepping forward or backward. When moving forward your rear toe remains glued to the floor until that leg is fully extended before swinging it through. In the backward dance-walk you obtain the same graceful curve by stretching backward with the big toe as far as you can reach without stiffness.

With Your Partner

Ave you mastered both the forward and backward dance-walk? The good dancer can step equally well in either direction. Too often the girl has difficulty in stepping forward, while the man often allows his weight to roll back onto his heels when moving backward. If you have not grasped the basic principles of walking smoothly with controlled balance by yourself, don't expect your partner to make up for your deficencies. Your dancing position with a partner is not primarily for support. It is for guidance in order to move in mutual harmony. Any difficulties experienced when dancing with another person can usually be traced to some defect in the technic of the dance-walk of one or both parties. Therefore, at intervals review the preceding chapters to check on your posture and walk. Also keep your body continually supple and responsive by practicing daily the exercises in Chapter I.

Dancing with a partner in the modern style requires a precise synchronization of movements which was not as essential a number of years ago when couples danced several inches apart. If movements are not timed perfectly, the result is trampled toes, bumped knees, indefinite leads, uncertain following, and in general an

ungraceful manner of dancing.

The first requisite for avoiding these errors is to take a position that enables you to step freely with your partner in any direction. That position is one in which you are facing each other practically toe to toe with the shoulders parallel. Since the lead is given mostly with the right arm, and since you look over your partner's right shoulder while dancing, there is a tendency for your partner to be brought slightly to your right. But avoid the ungainly position so often seen of dancing several inches to each other's right.

As you take this "closed" position with your partner, it is a comparatively simple matter to place the arms correctly. Raise them freely from the shoulders with the elbows well away from the body. The man's right arm is placed around the girl's waist with the hand flat and the fingers together but not stiff. Avoid decorating her back with a hand spread fanwise like the spokes of a wheel. There is no one exact position for this hand at the girl's back. It depends upon anatomical differences: relative heights, length of arms, girth, etc. With one partner the best position might be with the hand placed just below her left shoulder-blade, while with another it might be more comfortable with the hand at the center of her back or below the right shoulder-blade. The important considerations are to maintain comfortable positions while keeping the shoulders and feet parallel, and to present attractive lines while permitting freedom of movement.

The girl's corresponding left hand is placed on her partner's shoulder or upper arm, depending upon their relative heights. Her arm should follow the curve of the man's right arm and the two arms should be kept in contact. To keep this contact the man must carry his right elbow well raised instead of hugging it to his body. It gives firmness to the lead besides adding style to his

dancing.

The girl must avoid clutching at her partner's shoulder with the desperation of a drowning person. If she feels the necessity of hanging on for support, she is not properly balanced and should practice alone the forward and backward dance-walk, together with the associated exercises, in order to acquire the necessary suppleness and poise. Another awkward habit for the girl to avoid is that of hooking her left arm around and under her partner's right arm. This position not only appears ungraceful but also is uncomfortable for the man and makes leading difficult.

The man's left arm, having less to do, seems to offer the most trouble. The only requirements are to raise it easily from the shoulder to a position balancing the right arm, and to hold the girl's corresponding right hand in a manner that is both comfortable and pleasing to the eye. Yet how often on the dance floor do we encounter a stiff left arm that would do justice to a dodging half-back on the gridiron; sharp elbows that jolt the ribs; pointing fingers that menace the eyes; the extended thumb reminiscent of the questioning gesture of the

hitch-hiker!

While there is no one particular way of holding the girl's right hand, avoid the usual procedure of clamping palms together. This not only makes the hands appear larger, but becomes uncomfortable after a few dances if the hands begin to perspire. This same position of the hands is quite presentable, however, if the palms are separated by straightening the wrists and slightly cupping the hand so that the man grasps his partner's hand with only his thumb and fingers.

Another pleasing and practical position of the hands can be obtained by the man's placing his thumb against the palm or fingers of the girl's right hand and closing his fingers around the back of it. This not only gives the hands a slenderizing effect, but also permits of adjustability under varying conditions.

While the hands on this side should not be carried below shoulder-level, their distance from the body may vary. In the fox-trot and waltz the bend at the elbow forms an open angle; but in the tango this bend is more pronounced, so that the forearm forms practically a right angle with the upper arm. In the rumba the hands are brought still closer to the body, with the forearms of the couple close together. Also in the rumba, since a couple dances several inches apart, the girl may rest her left hand against her partner's shoulder or upper arm.

In general keep your arms free and flexible. The man's left elbow and the girl's right elbow should be on the same level. Carry the elbows away from the body except in the rumba. On a crowded floor, however, it is courteous to bring the arms closer to the body to avoid excessive jostling. Don't hunch your shoulders as you raise your arms; besides being energy-consuming it will cause the most attractive step to appear labored. Avoid holding your arms as if they were in plaster casts; keep them firm but not fixed. Girls, hold up your own arms! Your partner may be a pillar of strength, but on the dance floor he wants to conserve his energy for the enjoyment of his dancing.

As you take your dancing position in the manner described, break in the knees and sway toward your partner until you can easily lift your heels. In this position your upper bodies should be in light contact. You are now ready to step forward, backward, or sideways. Since it is customary in this country for the man to start with his left foot while the girl begins with her right, have that foot free with which you intend to take the first step.

Now if you both apply the principles explained in the chapter on the forward and backward dance-walk, your greatest difficulties will be over. Unfortunately, however, the mere thought of attempting to synchronize your movements with those of another person tends to set up a mental hazard that may stymie your good intentions. Since the feet are the chief obstacles, the first impulse is to look down; this twists the bodies out of position. Or the man, instead of leading with his body, may attempt to explore with his foot, with the result that he either steps on his partner's toes or bumps her knee. The girl in self-protection steps backward too quickly and consequently takes the lead away from her partner. Or the man, not wishing to take any chances of treading on his partner's toes, tries to step on the outside of her feet. This widespread straddle causes his body to rock from side to side like a sailor walking on a rolling deck.

How can these mental hazards be overcome? The first requirement is to know exactly where your feet are being placed in relation to your partner's feet. To establish this relationship firmly in mind, practice walking forward and backward with your partner, in a position directly facing each other but several inches apart. Instead of holding the arms in the usual manner, hold your partner's arms just above the elbows. As the girl swings her right leg backward from the hip, the man steps forward with his left, trying to brush the inner edge of this foot against his partner's stationary left foot. The girl then steps back left as the man swings forward his right foot, brushing it along the inner edge of her right foot. In other words, with every forward step pass the moving foot as closely as possible alongside your partner's foot

which is diagonally opposite—left foot brushing left, right brushing right. This parallel passing of the feet is an additional reason for stepping with the toes pointed

directly forward.

If your partner is directly in front of you, there is little danger of stepping on this foot which is diagonally opposite unless you actually cross your feet in stepping. Yet the average person tends to step several inches wide of this foot. To correct that tendency he should consciously bring his feet inward toward an imaginary center line. Of course, the one moving backward must also step in a straight line, with the knees almost brushing. Otherwise it would be impossible for the partner to step closely with his or her corresponding foot. After acquiring a mental picture and a kinesthesia or muscular consciousness of this relationship of the feet, practice the same forward and backward walk with your partner in the regular closed position without looking down.

Since the usual closed position tends to bring your partner slightly to your right, you will notice that your right feet will naturally pass rather closely while for the same reason the left feet are apt to be placed several inches apart. Therefore, concentrate for a time on approximating the left feet by swinging the left leg inward with each forward step. This contiguity of the diagonally opposite feet is one of the marks of the expert

dancer.

Now let us consider the feet that are on the same side: for example, the man's left and the girl's right. Provided the one traveling forward steps correctly with the body leading, the dancer moving backward can avoid being stepped on. It is simply a question of full extension of both the knee and the ankle. This backward stretch with the big toe not only insures the safety of your feet by adding several inches to the length of your step, but at the same time it improves your dance style.

When couples danced several inches apart, there was much less danger of striking your partner's foot. Consequently the dance-walk could be executed with less finesse. The modern style of dancing with the upper bodies in light contact requires perfect control and timing of movements to avoid interference with thighs, knees, or feet. Each must understand and master the basic dance-walk both forward and backward.

Because a couple invariably begins dancing in the "closed position," this position has received greater emphasis. However, there are other positions which add interest and variety to one's dancing. If both face in the same direction, we have the "open position." This may vary from a slight turning of the body to a full open position with the shoulders on the same line. In the latter case, if the man relinquishes his hold of the girl's right hand, it is also called the "conversational position." The free arm is allowed to hang at the side.

Another interesting variation is the "outside position," in which a couple are side by side facing in opposite directions. To reach this from the closed position the man can step either to the right or left side of his partner, or bring his partner to his right or left side, depending upon the sequence of steps. Avoid space between your bodies. If your partner is to your right, keep the right hips in light contact. This position will be known as "outside position right." With your partner on your left and the left hips close together, the position will be called "outside position left." In order to keep the shoulders parallel when assuming this position, the man must relax his right arm to permit his partner to adjust her position easily.

How to Lead and Follow

WE come now to a most important feature of ballroom dancing; a characteristic not inherent in other dance forms: namely, the principle of leading and following.

We have laid the preliminary groundwork which should precede a discussion of these principles. By the practice of appropriate exercises we learned to control our muscles and joints, which in turn determine our movements. After an analysis of our natural walk we discussed the modifications necessary to transform it into a dance-walk. After mastering both the forward and backward dance-walk, we were ready to try it with a partner. Our next step is to give variety to the dance-walk by means of certain fundamental figures.

Before attempting these dance steps with a partner, however, it is advisable to have a clear understanding of the underlying principles of leading and following. Dance steps are of little value unless the man can indicate to his partner what he is about to do. The rhythm, pattern, and sequence of steps depends upon the leader. He must be his own choregrapher. Like a pianist who improvises upon a theme of music, the leader should be able to improvise dance sequences from his knowledge of certain basic steps. Besides creating spontaneously, he must be able to convey these creations to his partner by means of certain pressures or leads. It appears, then, that the greater responsibility rests upon the man, who must do the leading.

On the other hand, the man's dancing is limited by the ability of his partner to follow. It matters little how many steps he is capable of doing if the girl cannot follow his lead. Therefore, the girl should first of all learn to control her movements by exercising and perfecting the forward and backward dance-walk. After acquiring balance and poise, she can learn to relax. It is the combination of these two factors, balance and relaxation, that makes for suppleness, pliability, and the ability to follow.

From this point on the success of a girl's dancing depends upon her knowledge of steps. She should acquaint herself with the widest possible vocabulary of dance movements. Too many girls are content to rely upon their skill in following with only a hazy conception of dance patterns. This is a mistake and leads to a careless, uncertain manner of dancing. While the girl is freed from the responsibility of planning and leading a combination of steps, she should be able to recognize the dance pattern once she has been given the lead.

In this regard it may be well to discuss the question of girls doing the leading. Contrary to a widespread belief, learning to lead does not impair a girl's ability to follow. In fact, it is one of the best ways to improve her dancing. Most girls who lead well also follow better than the average dancer. On the other hand, there are many girls who have never taken the man's part yet are often

guilty of leading. It is not so much the actual leading that makes the difference, as it is a knowledge of the principles of leading and following. But by learning the man's part, a girl more quickly gains body control and at the same time learns to visualize dance patterns, which is of great value in following easily. It gives a definiteness to her movements and enables her to de-

velop a clear-cut style.

What are the underlying principles of leading and following? When does the girl control the lead? What may cause her to experience difficulty in following? How can a girl be sure that she is following? What is the man's responsibility regarding the lead? What three factors contribute to a strong lead? Every dancer should know the answer to these questions. It means the difference between slipshod, uncertain meanderings around the dance floor and controlled, harmonious, diversified movements.

Leading and following is based on the principle that a couple do not, or should not, step at the same time. It can be stated quite simply as follows: The one who steps first is leading. A "step" in this case means the transference of weight. Since the man does the leading, he should always transfer the weight to his stepping foot an instant before his partner puts weight on her corre-

sponding foot.

A second principle can be stated as a corollary of the first. Since a couple do not transfer their weight at the same instant, there will be a resultant pressure against one's partner. The duty of the leader is to indicate clearly each change of rhythm and direction by an appropriate pressure with either the right arm, the hand, the shoulders, or the body, depending on the step. The aim of the one following is to respond easily to this pressure.

Many of the difficulties experienced when dancing

with a partner arise from lack of understanding of these principles. In fact, many dancers harbor the impression that the couple should step at the same time. It is easy to understand how this misconception might arise. The illusion of stepping simultaneously is created partly because of the fact that the feet are kept in contact with the floor, making it difficult to distinguish the actual transference of weight, and partly because the girl when stepping backward must swing her leg back before her partner can step forward.

The best way of visualizing the difference in the timing of the steps is to do a "side-close" figure a number of times to the left. This is done by stepping directly to the side with the left foot and closing with the right. You will notice that, if leading, your left foot will be placed to the side an instant before your partner's corresponding right foot. At the same time, in order to keep your partner directly in front of you, a slight pressure will be exerted by your right arm and hand. This pressure is the lead for this particular figure. With each new dance pattern that you learn, you should analyze it and practice giving a suitable lead that indicates clearly to your partner what you are planning to do.

While all leads are given by the man, he does not always control the lead. The lead is controlled by the girl when she steps backward. Leading and the control of the lead must not be confused. The former is an active procedure; while the latter is passive, merely waiting for the man to initiate the movement. Failing to wait for the man to step first—that is, not following—is probably the girl's most troublesome fault. Since the man can control the lead when stepping backward or sideways, it is only when he steps forward that his partner may take the lead away from him.

Why do girls often fail to follow w

Why do girls often fail to follow when moving backward? One reason is a desire to be considered a light

dancer. Naturally, no girl wishes to be accused of being heavy on her feet; but many girls confuse lightness with lack of resistance. If the girl does not resist—that is, wait for the man to step first—there is no way of determining what her partner is going to do next. Consequently their movements do not harmonize.

Contrary to general belief, the slight pressure resulting from the girl's resistance does not make her dancing seem heavy. Neither is light and heavy dancing a question of weight. It is entirely a matter of balance and body control. If you can keep your weight centered over the balls of your feet and toward your partner, you can dance lightly. But if you allow your weight to settle back on your heels, you will be considered a heavy dancer regardless of how little or how much you weigh.

A second cause for uncertainty in following is chiefly psychological. It is lack of confidence, a fear of not being able to follow well. This mental hazard tends to instigate a vicious cycle. Since the girl is not sure of herself, she subconsciously tightens up, making her unresponsive to any lead from her partner, which in turn increases her nervousness. Not understanding the principles of leading and following, she tries to step exactly with her partner, either by watching his feet or trying to outguess him. Neither plan works, because in the first case leads are given with the upper body and anticipate the movements of the feet, and in the second case it is difficult to predetermine the actions of a person who isn't thinking -after long practice most leads are given subconsciously. Of course, the only remedy is to understand the principles of following and learn to apply them, if possible, under the guidance of a reputable instructor.

A third, and the most common, cause of inability to follow can be traced directly to lack of balance. This, in turn, results from failure to master the backward dancewalk. No man can lead a partner who allows her weight

to ride back on her heels as she steps backward. Since there is a natural tendency for the body and legs to move as a unit, the inexperienced dancer will find herself clutching at her partner's shoulder and gripping his left hand in the attempt to maintain balance as she moves backward. Without realizing it, she is at the same time taking the lead away from her partner. In this situation if he steps on her toes, it is usually her own fault.

The remedy? A mastery of the backward dance-walk plus an understanding of the principles of following. When stepping backward you must be able to swing the leg independently of any movement of the torso. Just as the golfer must not allow his arms to pull his upper body out of position, in the same manner the dancer should not permit the legs to pull the body along as he steps backward.

Even with perfect balance and body control, however, you may still find difficulty in following unless you are aware of the underlying principles. This brings us to the third important question. How can a girl be sure that she is following? Knowing the answer may insure a girl's popularity as a partner. It may mean the difference between a pleasurable or a miserable evening. In theory, the answer is quite simple. In order to follow you must wait for your partner to step first.

This waiting will create a slight resistance and the resulting pressure is the lead. In other words, you follow the line of least resistance. If you move exactly with your partner, there will be no pressure. If there is no pressure, there is no lead. Since the man can control the lead when he moves backward or sideways, it is only when the girl steps backward that she must be exceptionally careful not to take the lead away from her partner by transferring the weight to her rear foot too quickly.

Of course, discretion must be used in regard to the degree of resistance. If done correctly, your partner, as a rule, will not be conscious of the fact that he is leading with his body. Keep the resisting pressure as light as possible, while avoiding any tendency to pull away. If a girl has developed sufficient balance, suppleness, and body control, she will be pliable enough to follow her partner from just a light contact of the upper body and will not find it necessary to rely on a heavy-handed lead.

Thus far emphasis has been placed on how to follow while assuming that the girl's partner has given her a firm, definite lead. What is the man's responsibility in this co-operative arrangement? Since no two men dance alike, nor employ the same sequence of steps, the girl never knows what to expect. Consequently, it is the duty of the man to indicate each step clearly by an appropriate pressure with the right hand, arm, or upper part of the body. The ability to lead well requires considerable practice and excellent co-ordination. But since the entire modern social dance is based on this requirement, it is up to the man to perfect himself in this phase of the art if he aspires to be a good dancer. The strong leader is always in demand as a partner.

What is meant by a strong lead? It isn't just a question of pressure. In fact, too heavy a pressure is as discomforting as too little. Rather, a strong lead is a combination of pressure and timing; the correct amount of pressure applied at the right moment. As a rule the lead should slightly precede the step. This pressure with the hand, arm, or body indicates to the girl exactly what and where her next movement is to be. While it is the girl's responsibility to wait for this pressure, it is the man's duty to indicate it definitely and, if possible, a

little ahead of his step.

Besides anticipating a step, a strong lead requires varying degrees of pressure. The right arm and hand may be somewhat relaxed during certain movements and exert a firm pressure for others. When the man moves forward, the lead is given with his body, and the resulting pressure is determined by the girl's resistance. Therefore, the right arm may be partially relaxed. Changes of direction and rhythm require an increase in pressure with the right arm or hand, depending upon the step. The left arm has little to do with leading. Changes from closed to open positions, and vice versa, are controlled largely by the fingers and wrist of the right hand. But avoid digging the tips of your fingers into the girl's back as if giving a massage. Keep the fingers flat.

Again, the amount of pressure used in leading varies according to the ability of one's partner to follow. The expert, perfectly balanced dancer can follow a lead given so lightly that one might be misled to believe that there is no pressure being exerted. It is this subtlety of effortless, harmonious movement of the trained dancers which misleads the layman and even some teachers into overlooking the significance and importance of the lead in the modern dance.

The aim of the girl should be to acquire the ability to respond to the slightest pressure or movements of her partner. This requires exceptionally good balance, pliability or controlled relaxation, and a thorough knowledge of a great variety of steps.

The man, on the other hand, with each step he learns should perfect a firm lead which he can modify according to the ability of his partner to follow. Long practice with the same partner will enable a couple to lead and follow subconsciously without realizing that any pressure is being exerted. But when dancing for the first

time with a new partner, the man should instil confidence in his partner by indicating leads consciously and firmly until she becomes acquainted with his style.

The man's ability to lead well is influenced a great deal by his position with a partner. Hugging the elbows to your body considerably hampers the lead, especially for turns. Unless the floor is crowded keep the arms free by holding the elbows well raised and slightly forward, but on the same level. Reaching too far around the girl's waist will pull both out of line, making it difficult to step easily. A boa-constrictor grip with the right arm does not imply a strong lead. On the contrary, it greatly restricts the girl's movements. At the other extreme, a limp, "jelly-fish" hold is about as pleasurable as the handshake of a Uriah Heep.

Briefly, then, a strong lead is determined by three

main factors.

First: Knowledge of steps and rhythms. By clearly understanding a few fundamental steps in each dance rhythm, the leader can soon learn to create his own interesting combinations and variations. By learning to visualize mentally each dance pattern before communicating the lead to his partner, he can indicate it with assurance. Of course, it is assumed that the leader has already acquired the necessary foundation dance technic.

Second: *Pressure*. Having decided upon the dance pattern, the leader should give the required pressure or lead which will most clearly indicate his intention. This pressure is usually given with the upper body or right arm and hand.

Third: Timing. That means giving the pressure at the right moment. It need not be heavy provided it is applied at the right instant. As a rule, the lead should slightly anticipate the step. The strong leader lets his

partner know in advance what he is planning to do. Proper timing, however, depends largely upon the first factor, knowledge of steps. For if the man hasn't a clear picture in his own mind of each dance figure, his lead is apt to be correspondingly indefinite.

The Medium Fox-Trot

Rhythm, 4/4. Tempo, 34 to 44 measures per minute.

We are now ready to apply the basic principles to the various dance rhythms. The logical dance with which to begin is the fox-trot. Not only because by far the greatest percentage of dance music is played in this rhythm, but also because the dance-walk is the foundation of the fox-trot.

Since fox-trot music is played at various tempos, ranging from 28 to 60 measures per minute, it is advisable to divide this dance accordingly into three sections-slow, medium, and fast. As the medium tempo is the simplest of the three, it will be discussed first.

By briefly tracing the development of the fox-trot we can more readily appreciate the reason for these gradations in rhythm and tempo. As compared to the waltz, it is of quite recent origin, having been danced a little over thirty-five years. Considering the fact that a few years previous to the introduction of the fox-trot, there was a plethora of animal and fowl dances, such as the Turkey Trot, Bunny Hug, Grizzly Bear, Lame Duck,

Horse Trot, Elephant Rag, etc., it might seem that the fox-trot comes under the same category. Such is not the case, however. During the season of 1913-14 a musical-comedy star by the name of Harry Fox was doing a number in a Ziegfeld show at the New Amsterdam Theater in which he used a simple trotting dance step to the popular ragtime music that was the forerunner of our modern jazz and swing.

The management, wishing to capitalize on the success of Fox's trot, requested Oscar Duryea to introduce the same dance at the night club in the roof garden above

the theater.

Dancing this quick running step alternately with sixteen chorus girls, Mr. Duryea soon found himself as winded as a marathon runner. Consequently, he decided to conserve his energy by alternating four slow walking steps with eight quick running steps. This became the pattern for the first fox-trot.

For two or three decades previously a dance called the two-step had been popular. Soon this two-step or chassé movement was incorporated in the fox-trot to add variety. It is still one of the most important variations. At the same time, the public found it easier to eliminate

the running steps and the trot turned into a walk.

Another popular dance anteceding the fox-trot was the one-step—so named because one step was taken to each beat of a lively 2/4 rhythm. The one-step was created by the dancing masters in 1911 to replace the vulgar turkey trot which the sailors had introduced a few years previously along the notorious Barbary Coast in San Francisco. Gradually during the following ten years, one-step music became identified with a fast fox-trot and the former term was discarded.

Another important factor in the development of the fox-trot was the publication about this time of the famous trilogy of "Memphis Blues," "St. Louis Blues"

and "Beale Street Blues" by the colored composer, William C. Handy, recognized as "Father of the Blues." This style of music has had a pronounced influence on our slow fox-trot rhythms. However, the slow fox-trot did not emerge as a standard dance until the early Thirties. During that period the slow ballad music of certain prominent orchestras created a demand for this dance style. After passing through a transition stage, during which it was known as the "Westchester," the slow fox-trot is now one of our most popular dance rhythms.

Thus, while all fox-trot rhythms are basically the same, the character and style of the music varies with changes in tempo. Since a ballroom dance should reflect its accompanying music, we can distinguish three general forms of the fox-trot. While the dance-walk is the foundation of all three forms, and many of the fundamental figures are interchangeable, yet you should be able to modify and adapt these steps, not only to the different tempos, but also to other factors, such as the amount of dance space, condition of the floor, number of other couples, etc. In this respect the fox-trot is comparable to the fast Viennese waltz and the slower American waltz, which have the same rhythm and the same basic figures, but the steps of each dance are modified to conform to differences in tempo, space, and maneuverability.

RHYTHM

Fox-trot music is played in 4/4 time. That is, there are four quarter-beats or their equivalent to a measure. While each beat receives the same amount of time, they are not accented evenly. The first beat of each measure receives the heavier accent, while the third beat is given a secondary accent slightly lighter. When doing the dance-walk in time with the music, each step should fall exactly on one of these accented beats. That is, you take

two steps to a measure. For this reason it is more convenient to give two counts to each measure corresponding to the two strongly accented beats of music. When extra steps are taken between these accented beats, the count of *and* is used. For example, the basic figure is counted "one-and-two." The first and third steps fall on the accented beats, while the closing step is taken on the unaccented beat in between.

If you have difficulty in recognizing fox-trot or other dance rhythms, have someone count the time and measures for you until you can easily differentiate among them. Also, since tempos are only relative, and a specific number of measures per minute means little to the average person, learn to distinguish roughly the difference in tempos of the slow, medium, and fast fox-trots.

Do not feel discouraged if at first you have difficulty in adjusting the step to the music. It doesn't necessarily indicate the lack of a sense of rhythm. Usually it is merely a question of training the ear; of listening for the accented beat.

QUICK AND SLOW

Besides indicating the rhythm of a dance step or combination by giving the musical count, the rhythm can also be indicated by the terms "quick" and "slow." These terms must not be confused with rapidity of movement. Rather, "quick" and "slow" refer to the relative length of time the foot remains in position after the step is taken. For example, the foot may be moved quickly into position yet it would be a "slow" step if it remained there for a full beat of music. Or the foot may be moved slowly into place, but would be a "quick" step if it retained weight for only a half-beat of music.

The terms "full beat" and "half-beat" apply to music that can be given two counts per measure. If you give four counts to a measure, a "slow" step would receive two counts and a "quick" step one count. However, from the standpoint of ballroom dancing it is more convenient to indicate the rhythm by giving only two counts to a measure for all dances except the waltz, lindy and mambo. Likewise the terms "quick" and "slow" can be applied to all dances except the waltz. In this dance, since each step of the basic figure receives the same amount of time, these terms are unnecessary.

FUNDAMENTAL FIGURES

While we noted that the dance-walk furnishes a frame-work for the fox-trot, that alone would soon prove as monotonous as a metronome. Therefore, our first consideration is how best to give variety to the dance-walk. This can be done in several ways. For example, by changing direction with steps like the side-close and basic figure; by pausing with the hesitation, balance, and rock steps; by changing rhythm, using the basic figure; by turning, using the pivot and basic figure or combinations of the two; by making use of the closed, open, and outside positions.

Each dance rhythm has a number of figures which can be combined in innumerable ways. By "figure" is meant a combination of movements which form a unit. Each unit should have certain characteristics that are clearly recognizable and are peculiar to that unit. Two figures when joined together may overlap—that is, the finish of one may be the start of the other. Also when walking steps are introduced to form a connecting link between figures, care should be taken to recognize each unit among the mélange.

A thorough knowledge of these figures or units gives the dancer a definite working vocabulary with which he can create his own combinations and sequences. An attempt has been made to identify each figure by an appropriate term which most aptly describes the particular movements. While the following list does not pretend to cover all the possible steps, it will provide a good working foundation for the average dancer:

1. The Side-close

4. The Balance

2. The Basic Step

5. The Hesitation

3. The Rock Step

6. The Pivot Turn

THE SIDE-CLOSE

This is probably the simplest variation of the dancewalk. As the term implies, a step is taken to one side followed by a closing step with the free foot. The term "step," when used to indicate a single movement of the foot, always includes a change of weight.

The side-close can be done to either right or left and can be repeated a number of times in the same direction.

Our next object is to combine the side-close with walking steps. Beginning with the left foot, take two steps forward and do a side-close to the left. See Fig. 1. Repeat this figure a number of times and then try the same step backward, starting left and closing to the left. Reverse the figure by beginning with the right foot and doing the side-close right. Practice this combination both forward and backward.

There are certain important muscular habits that should be acquired through the practice of this figure. First, the ability to place the foot directly to the side at a right angle to the line of the forward and backward dance-walk. Simple as it sounds, the average dancer tends to step obliquely forward or backward instead of directly to the side. While remaining in the closed position, diagonal steps are rarely used. They are of value when changing from the closed to the outside positions and vice versa.

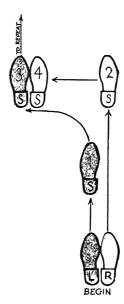


Fig. 1-The Side-close Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Step forward left	S
2—Step forward right	S
3-Allow the left leg to relax and swing	5
close to the right and then place the foo	t
directly to the side	S
4—Close slowly with the right	S

The second habit to be acquired at this time is the ability to regulate the length of the side step. This kinesthetic sense or muscular consciousness must be trained; first by looking at the feet to ascertain their relative positions, and later by the "feel" of the foot in space or on the floor. Most beginners tend to step too wide. A step of twelve to fifteen inches is sufficient.

The third muscular habit to be fixed at this time is the ability to relax the moving leg; first by letting go of the ankle and knee joints as you place the foot to the side, and then closing slowly as you release the ankle, knee, and hip joints of that leg. Allow the hips to tilt slightly with each change of weight, as in walking. If the moving leg is held stiffly, the step will be jerky and uneven. Later, the same habits are apt to be carried over into similar movements of the waltz, tango, rumba, etc. While the side-close is more useful as a dance step in the fast fox-trot, it is introduced at this time as important training for the basic step and the waltz.

THE LEAD

For this step the lead is comparatively simple. While moving forward, partially relax the right arm, since the pressure is given with the body. When about to step to the side—that is, you should be ready on count 2—a sideward pressure with the right arm and hand will indicate to your partner the change of direction. For the side-close right, likewise give the pressure with the right arm and hand but keep the fingers flat. Avoid any movement of the shoulders. Continue the pressure as long as you are moving sideways, and then relax the arm if you intend to step forward; or pull gently if stepping backward. If the girl is relaxed, and balanced well forward with the weight on the balls of her feet, she should have no difficulty in moving with her partner.

COMMON MISTAKES

- 1. Stepping diagonally forward or backward instead of directly to the side.
- 2. Closing too quickly, usually due to tense leg muscles.
 - 3. Stepping too wide.
 - 4. Stepping directly from one open position of the

feet to another without first swinging the foot inward close to the supporting foot.

5. Rising on the balls of the feet and then dropping

the heels as the feet are brought together.

6. Failure of the leader to indicate to his partner the change of direction.

7. Failure of the girl to wait for, or respond to, the

man's lead.

THE BASIC STEP

Every dance that has become standardized has a certain step or figure which serves to characterize it. It corresponds to the "time step" of a tap routine, or the melodic theme of a musical composition. Since this particular unit has been an integral part of the fox-trot since soon after its origin thirty-five years ago, it has been designated as the Basic Fox-trot Step. While the dance-walk may be considered as the backbone of the fox-trot, this figure is by far the most important variation. The side-close was described first more for its value as a practice figure than for its use as a dance step except for fast tempos when it might be difficult to use the basic step.

The term originally applied to this figure was "two-step," which was also the name of a dance popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When the fox-trot came into vogue, the two-step was absorbed within its wider folds. As the character of the music and dance changed, the two-step likewise underwent a transformation, until there was little semblance between the

new form and the original figure.

Also the term "two-step" was in itself a misnomer, since the figure has three changes of weight. Originally, the term probably referred to the fact that it was done to 2/4 time. When adapted to the 4/4 rhythm of the fox-

trot, the manner of execution became so altered that the term "two-step" was unsuitable.

A synonym for two-step used by many was "chassé." However, this French term, borrowed from the classical dance, is more generally used to designate only a step-close, while the basic figure of the fox-trot finishes with the feet separated.

This figure can be described, then, as a side-close followed by a step forward, backward, or sideways. The three changes of weight require one measure of music.

The rhythm is quick-quick-slow.

The side-close movement is stressed because, as a rule, good dancers avoid stepping on a diagonal line while in the closed position. It is a factor dictated by style or technic, which in turn is determined by the standards set by the better dancers and teachers, just as correct use of words and grammatical construction are determined by the speech and writings of recognized scholars.

Fig. 2 shows the basic figure with all three steps taken directly to the side. This should be practiced to both left and right. Fig. 3 illustrates the basic step repeated traveling forward. This step should also be practiced moving backward. Fig. 4 shows a forward basic step starting with the left foot, followed by one backward with the right. This square pattern is the basis for a left turn. By reversing this figure—that is, doing a basic step forward right and back left—you have the foundation for a right turn.

Fig. 5 illustrates the square developed into quarter-turns left. Four basic steps done alternately forward and backward enable you to make a complete turn. You start and finish in the same place. These quarter-turns should also be perfected turning right by reversing the figure—that is, doing one forward right and then back left.

Figs. 6 and 7 show a further development of the turns. Instead of using four measures, a complete turn is made

in two measures. This results in a progressive movement. Note that a preliminary quarter-turn must be made before beginning the basic step. If turning right, you first make a quarter-turn on the right foot to face the wall. For a left turn, pivot on the left foot to face the center of the room.

Since it is customary for the man to begin dancing with his left foot, two preliminary walking steps are required for the right turn, while only one forward step is necessary for a left turn. However, in order to make a sequence of eight counts or four measures, two more walking steps can be added as a preparation. The quarter-turn right would then be made on count 4, while the left turn would start on count 3.

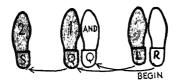


Fig. 2-The Basic Step Sideways

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Short step to side left	Q
and—Close with right	Q
2 —Short step to side left	Š

Reverse by stepping to side right, closing with left, and stepping to side right. Practice until you can do the figure smoothly and in good rhythm. Concentrate on relaxing the ankles and knees. There should be no jerky movements.

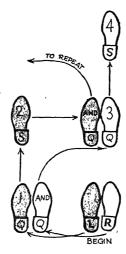


Fig. 3—The Basic Step Forward

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Short step to side L	Q
and—Close with R	Q S
2 —Step forward L	S
3 —Swing R close to L and step to side	Q
and—Close with L	Q
4 —Step forward R	S
Repeat. Also practice doing the step backwar	rd.



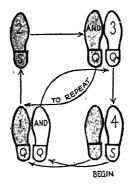


Fig. 4—The Basic Step Forward and Backward

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Short step to side L	Q
and—Close with R	Q
2 —Step forward L	Š
3 —Swing R close to L and step to side	Q
and—Close with L	Q
4 —Step back R	Š
Repeat; then reverse by stepping back L	and for-
ward R.	

ward K.

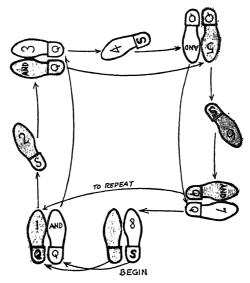


Fig. 5-The Basic Step-Quarter-turns

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Short step to side L	Q
and—Close with R	Ò
2 -Rotate shoulders to left as you step for	÷-
ward L turning the toe out	S
You have now made a quarter-turn left.	
3 —Step to the side R on a line with the axi	is
of the shoulders	Q
and—Close with L	Q
4 -Continue to rotate shoulders left as yo	u
step back R with toe turning in	S

You have completed a half-turn left. By repeating these four counts you can complete the turn and finish in your original starting position. When practicing, use the four walls as landmarks. Practice quarter-turns right by doing the basic step forward right and back left.

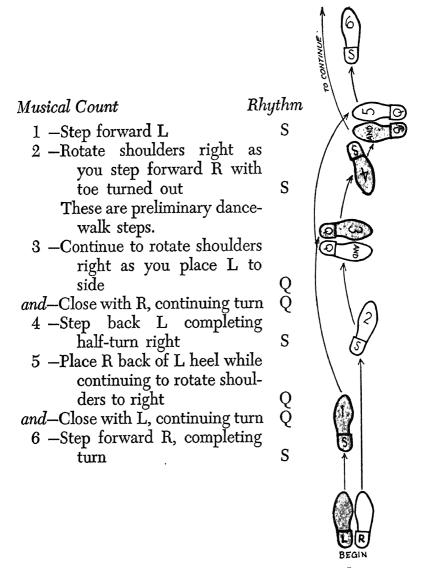


Fig. 6-The Basic Step-Half-turns Right

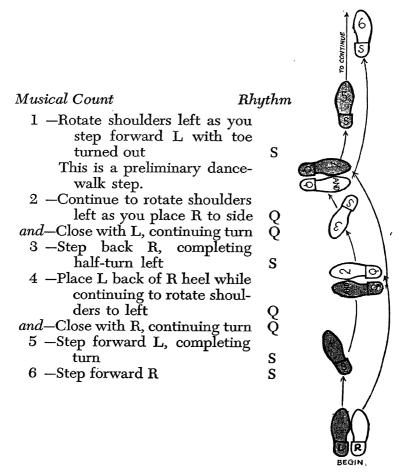


Fig. 7-The Basic Step-Half-turns Left

THE LEAD

The lead for the basic step is not difficult, since the figure always begins with a side-close. This sideward movement is indicated by a firm pressure with the right arm and hand. When moving to your right avoid pressing heavily with the tips of the fingers. Keep the fingers flat. Or, if you wish, turn the palm downward and apply the pressure at the base of the thumb. Keeping the right elbow well raised to maintain contact with your partner's arm will make your leading much stronger, especially for turns. Avoid tilting the shoulders.

After the side-close movement, the subsequent lead depends upon the direction which follows. If sideways or backward, the pressure is given with the arm and hand. If forward, the arm is partially relaxed and the lead is indicated with the upper body.

For turning figures, the lead is given by rotating the shoulders in addition to the other pressures. When turning your partner through a larger arc, such as the last half of a progressive basic turn (Figs. 6 and 7), a much firmer lead is required to bring your partner around you and at the same time maintain the correct position.

It is of especial importance that the leader visualize in advance the pattern and rhythm of the figure. He is then prepared to anticipate the movements of the feet by an appropriate pressure with the arm or body.

COMMON MISTAKES

- 1. Making the side step too wide.
- 2. Closing the feet too quickly.
- 3. Stepping on a diagonal instead of directly to the side.
 - 4. Failing to relax ankle, knee, and hip joints.

5. Sliding—that is, putting too much pressure on the moving foot.

6. Lifting the foot off the floor. Maintain a light contact by relaxing the ankle. This will help to avoid jerky movements.

7. Taking a wide side step on the last half of a progressive turn. The one moving backward should act as a pivoting center with feet together.

8. Failure of the leader to give a firm pressure to in-

dicate the rhythm and direction.

THE PRINCIPLES OF TURNING

At this point, it may be well to discuss in general terms some of the principles that apply to practically all turns made with a partner in the closed position.

While turning is one of the best means of giving variety to your dancing, it also is the most difficult. The continual change of direction, besides tending to throw you off balance, is apt to be disconcerting. You become confused in your relationship to different parts of the room. In fact, if you turn too rapidly, it may seem as if the room is doing the revolving!

Generally speaking, different parts of the room can be used as guide-posts. For example, facing forward means that you are facing in the "line of dance" (abbreviated L O D), the imaginary line that you follow around the room in a counter-clockwise direction to avoid traffic congestion. A half-turn right or left brings you with your back to the L O D. If facing in the L O D, a right turn is always toward the nearest wall, while a left turn is toward the center of the room. By picturing your position in relation to the room you will greatly increase your facility to visualize dance patterns.

While these landmarks are important for keeping in mind the general outline of a step or turn, they are of

little value in placing your feet correctly in relation to your own body and to your partner's feet. On a dance floor our directions and movements are often influenced by other couples. While maneuvering, it is impossible to keep in mind our exact position in relation to the room. Therefore, steps should be taken in relation to our own body. In ballroom dancing the shoulder girdle is the most stable section of our anatomy. It is also the guiding force in making turns. Accordingly, movements of the leg can be made in relation to a line passing through the shoulders.

Imagine a bar extending from one shoulder to the other like a yoke. This represents the axis of the shoulders. A side step will be in line with the bar. A forward or backward step will be at right angles to it. A diagonal step would be on an oblique line between the forward or backward and the side step. Diagonal steps are used only occasionally; for example, when stepping from the closed to the outside position, or back to the closed position. If you step directly forward or backward, your knees and feet will almost brush as they pass. The welltrained dancer avoids a spread effect of the legs.

When turning, if you are not careful you will find yourself unconsciously stepping on a diagonal. To avoid this in-between position note carefully the direction in which your shoulders are facing; then step exactly at

right angles to the axis of the shoulders.

Besides determining the direction of a step, the shoulders are also of primary importance in the execution of turns. Practically all turns begin with a rotation of the shoulders. There are two reasons for this. First, if leading, it lets your partner know in advance that you are about to turn. In other words, you are giving a strong lead. Second, by rotating the shoulders you are twisting the body or developing torsion which provides you with a good leverage. By winding up like a spring you are

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thus able to turn not only yourself but also your partner. To train the body to co-ordinate in this manner, it is helpful to practice certain exercises. Contrary body movement, as it is also called, is simply an exaggeration of a natural adjustment of the body to maintain balance. Normally, when walking we allow the right arm to swing forward as we step with the left leg, and vice versa. If this opposition swing of the arms is augmented by a rotation of the shoulders, we have contrary body movement or body torsion. The rotation of the shoulders toward the forward foot should be practiced while walking both forward and backward.

There is another important point to be considered, however. Merely turning the shoulders is not sufficient. The movement must be carried all the way down to the feet. As the shoulders are rotated the feet are allowed to turn in the same direction. Practically all turns in the closed position are made in the direction of the forward foot. Therefore, the toe of the front foot always points out while the rear toe turns in.

To acquaint yourself with this principle try the following experiment: Stand on the balls of both feet with the right a few inches in front of the left. Now rotate your shoulders to the right or in the direction of the forward foot. At the same time, allow the legs and feet to turn with the shoulders. Look at your feet. Both toes should be pointing in the same direction as the shoulders are facing. That is, the right toe is turned out and the rear left toe is pointed inward. Try to develop a kinesthesia or muscular sensation produced by this twisting of the body, as contrary body movement is one of the most important principles applied to ballroom dancing.

Reverse the position of your feet and rotate your shoulders to the left, allowing the feet to turn with the shoulders. This demonstrates the principle underlying left turns. A left turn can be started either by stepping

forward on the left foot or back on the right.

When turning, remember that the direction of a forward or backward step is determined by the axis of the shoulders before they are rotated. In other words, swing the leg in a line at right angles to the axis of the shoulders, and at the same time turn the shoulders toward the front foot and allow the foot to follow. This movement tends to cross the legs.

The degree of turn depends upon how far the shoulders are rotated. If a side step is to follow the shoulder rotation, as in a waltz turn, be sure that the foot is placed on a line with the axis of the shoulders in the

new position.

Let us summarize the principles pertaining to turns. Turns are indicated by a rotation of the shoulders toward the forward foot. For a right turn your right foot should be in front, and close to your partner's right foot. For left turns, left feet should be close together.

The feet follow the shoulders. Since turns are made in the direction of the forward foot, the front toe turns out

and the back toe rotates inward.

Partners alternately travel around each other. Turns are based on alternate forward and backward movements. The one moving forward travels around his partner while the one moving backward acts as a pivoting center. This principle is especially noticeable in the Viennese waltz. An exception is the circle turn, in which both travel around a central point simultaneously instead of alternately. (See Chapter XI, "The Rumba.")

THE ROCK STEP

The rock step is a useful figure, especially on a crowded floor. As the name implies, it consists of a rocking movement usually done forward and backward. If

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the dance-walk is completely mastered, you will have little difficulty with this figure. Basically it is merely walking in place; transferring the weight forward and backward without moving the feet. As in the dancewalk, each change of weight is given a full count.



Fig. 8—The Rock Step Forward Right

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Step forward L	S
2-Step forward R and pause with all th	.e
weight on this foot, but leaving the	
in place	S
3-Transfer your weight back to the L, bu	
leave the R in place. Allow the from	ıt
knee to straighten and the toe to ris	е
slightly	S
4-Transfer weight forward to R, ready t	0
continue walk	S



 ${\it Fig.~9-- The~Rock~Step~Forward~Left}$

Musical Count Ri	hythm
1—Step forward L	S
2—Step forward R	S
3-Step forward L and pause with weight on	
this foot but without moving the R	
from its rear position	S
4—Transfer weight back to R. As the L knee	
straightens, release the L toe slightly	
from the floor	S
Transfer weight forward to L and repeat:	figure.

The rock step can also be done turning. It then resembles a pivot turn with the exception that the latter is strictly a rotating movement without the forward and backward body sway of the rock turn.

To make a practice combination of four counts, preliminary walking steps are taken to prepare for the rock. When dancing, the leader at his own discretion can stop on either foot, whether moving forward or backward.

THE LEAD

Figures that interrupt a progressive movement should be accompanied by a correspondingly firm lead. Since the feet are to remain in position after stopping, the pressure should be applied with the right arm and hand as weight is being transferred on the last progressive forward step. For example, to stop on count 3 you should be prepared on count 2. Apply the pressure gradually, as you would the brakes on a car, while you are transferring weight to the left foot on count 3. When changing weight alternately forward and backward, use pressure with the arm and body according to the direction in which you are moving.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Over-balancing caused by not anticipating the pause.

2. Moving the free foot from position after stopping.

3. Trying to rock on the balls of the feet, instead of using the entire foot as in the dance-walk.

- 4. Letting weight go back onto the heel of the rear foot. As in the backward dance-walk, the knee of the rear leg must flex slightly to keep the weight forward on the ball of the foot.
- 5. Failing to indicate to your partner in advance that you are about to pause.

THE BALANCE

This is another useful figure for the crowded floor. It corresponds to a rock step done sideways. With the feet about ten or twelve inches apart, the weight is shifted from one foot to the other on each accented beat of music. Instead of leaving the free foot in place, however, as in the rock step, the knee and ankle are relaxed and it is allowed to strike lightly against the supporting foot. This striking movement is given the count of and. Allow the hips to tilt slightly with each change of weight to avoid swaying the upper body.

The balance is often combined with the basic step done sideways. It can be done alternately to the left and right. Review Fig. 2, and after completing the three sideward steps of the basic figure to the left, relax the right leg and allow the foot to strike lightly against the supporting left foot. The count will be 1-and-2-and.

Reverse to the right.

This is also a popular figure in the slow fox-trot.



Fig. 10—The Balance Step

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Take a short side step L	Q
and-Relax the ankle and knee of the R, and	7
allow the foot to strike lightly against	
the L	Q
2 –Step to side R	Q
and-Relax L ankle and knee, letting the foot	
strike lightly against the R	Q.

THE LEAD

The sideward movement is indicated by a firm pressure with the right hand and arm in the direction that you wish to move. Keep the fingers flat or use the base of the thumb. As the free foot swings toward the supporting leg, give a pressure in the opposite direction. By giving the lead for the succeeding movement a little in advance, you can prevent your partner from transferring weight to the foot that is swinging inward. Remember that proper timing is more important than a heavy pressure.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Stepping with the feet too far apart.

2. Failing to relax the ankle and knee of the leg that swings inward.

3. Not allowing the hips to tilt, which causes swaying of the body and the movement to appear ungraceful.

4. Failing to touch the supporting foot.

5. Bending at the waist, causing the shoulders to tilt. The balancing is done with the hips.

THE HESITATION

The rock, balance, and hesitation are in the same category. They are all figures that break the progressive movement. The rock and hesitation are usually done forward and backward, while the balance is a sideward movement.

Like the rock step, the hesitation is a pause with the weight on one foot. But while in the rock step the free foot remains in place after pausing, with the hesitation the free leg swings either forward or backward according to the direction in which you are moving.

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For example, if you are moving forward and decide to stop with the weight on your right foot, the free left foot can be brought forward, even with the right to what is called the "arch" position; or, better yet, allowed to swing forward until the leg is extended with the toe lightly touching the floor. This is usually known as the "point" position.

The same principle applies when moving backward. That is, as you pause with the weight on one foot, the other leg is allowed to continue in the same direction.

For beginners the arch position is easier; but more advanced dancers will find that the hesitation point gives more attractive lines to the body, which is an important factor in good style.

Care must be taken that no weight is placed on the toe that is pointing, as the following step is taken with this

	•	<u>a</u> 0
Musical Count	Rhythm	↑\ ³ /
1 —Step forward L 2 —Swing R forward and		
toe lightly to floor w	S	
3 —Step forward R a few in 4 —Swing L forward and toe lightly to floor w	touch	y Î
extended	S	
·		JR

Fig. 11-The Forward Hesitation

BEGIN

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foot. It may be made either forward or backward from

the point position.

Practice walking forward and backward, stopping at will on either foot and letting the free foot swing through to the point position. Keep the weight centered over the ball of the supporting foot. Do the hesitation forward on the left and back on the right. Then reverse the movement.

THE LEAD

In order to keep balanced on one foot, the lead must be firm and you should be prepared to give it at least a full beat of music in advance. However, the arresting pressure can be applied a trifle later than the corresponding lead for the rock step, due to the fact that the free foot continues moving instead of remaining in place.

If you wish to continue forward after the hesitation, partially relax the arm and give the lead with the body. If you are moving backward and wish to stop, the position of your body automatically checks your partner's forward movement. To continue backward, a gentle pressure with the hand is all that is necessary to indicate the direction.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Failing to anticipate the hesitation.

2. Putting weight on the toe that is pointing.

3. Leaving it in place for the next step. It must be moved either forward or backward.

4. Not fully extending the leg. Either bring the foot to the arch position or follow through completely. Do not half-heartedly leave it somewhere in-between.

5. Stopping your partner too suddenly instead of ap-

plying the pressure gradually.

THE PIVOT TURN

We now come to the most difficult figure of the foxtrot. If you can do good pivot turns, you are probably a better-than-average dancer, as these turns require exceptionally good co-ordination and body control.

By pivot turn is meant a rotary movement by means of which a couple alternately travel around each other without bringing the feet to a closed position as in the basic fox-trot turn. The forward foot, which stabilizes the turn and serves as the center of the pivoting movement, must remain close to your partner's forward foot. In other words, right feet adjoin for right turns and left feet are together for left turns.

Many dancers are under the impression that they are doing pivot turns when in reality they are doing rock turns. As mentioned under the rock step, the relative position of the feet is the same. Unlike rock turns, however, which are characterized by a forward and backward sway of the body, pivoting movements are strictly

rotary.

To pivot smoothly and to avoid body sway, divide your weight evenly between the heel of the front foot and the ball of the back foot. When you step forward in a pivot turn, take the weight on the heel first and then allow it to roll to the ball of the foot. This gives steadiness to the turn and counteracts a tendency to accent the forward step by carrying the weight too much over the front foot. Keep the knees in easy flexion, straight without stiffness. To keep weight off the back heel, it is necessary to maintain a slight bend in the knee of the rear leg.

Besides suppleness in the ankle and knee joints, the ability to pivot well depends upon control of the pelvis and hip joint. As in the dance-walk, each change of weight is accompanied by a tilting of the pelvis toward

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the supporting foot. That is, the hip will be higher on that side.

While correct position of the feet and control of each joint are essential for balance and smoothness, the primary factor in the execution of pivot turns is the rotation of the shoulders as explained earlier in this chapter under "Principles of Turning." Carefully review that section. Briefly, then, while the turning of the shoulders carries the body through a rotary movement, ankle, knee, and hip joints are acting as shock absorbers to prevent body sway.



Fig. 12-The Pivot Turn Right

Musical Count	Rhythm
1-Step forward R and simultaneously turn	ı
shoulders and foot to right	S
2-Move L around in semicircle and trans-	
fer weight	S
3-While continuing to rotate shoulders	,
turn R outward and step in place	S
4-Again swing L around and transfer	ŗ
weight, completing turn	S

Fig. 12 shows the pattern for a right turn made in four counts. It corresponds to the quarter-turns of the basic step. You start and finish in the same position.



Fig. 13-The Pivot Turn Left

- 8 1	
Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Step forward L and at the same time turn	l
shoulders and foot to left. Swing L in-	•
ward close to partner's L. The legs will	
be partially crossed	S
2-Move R around with toe turned in and	
transfer weight. Keep legs crossed	S
3-Continue rotation of shoulders and step)
L in place as you turn toe out to catch	l.
up with the shoulders	S
4-Again move R around following the ro-	•
tation of the shoulders and transfer	
weight, completing turn	S
1 1 1 0	

Fig. 13 illustrates the same step turning left. While the patterns appear similar, there are certain important differences in the manner of executing the two turns. Due to the fact that the man leads with his right arm, which brings his partner slightly to his right, it naturally fol-

lows that a couple can easily keep their right feet together while turning. For a left pivot turn, on the other hand, it is necessary to partially cross the legs in order to keep the left feet in contact. If your forward or pivoting foot separates from your partner's corresponding front foot, you will have difficulty in turning. To keep the crossed position of the legs and the left feet together, you must exaggerate the inward rotation of the right or rear toe. While at first this position may feel awkward, with practice it becomes as easy as a right pivot turn and is more interesting.

To make practice combinations of eight counts, precede each turn with dance-walk steps. For the right turn, start L and walk three steps forward. Begin the pivot on the fourth step. Count 8 will also be in place. The left turn can be preceded by four dance-walk steps and the turn started on the L on count 5.

Like the basic turns, pivot turns can also be progressive. That is, a complete revolution is made with two changes of weight instead of four. The pivoting action must be proportionately stronger. The turning of the toes in or out is augmented by a twisting movement on the ball of the foot. This rotation on the ball of the foot, which occurs in varying degrees in most turns, is much more pronounced in progressive pivot turns. It is indicated in the diagram by a dotted outline of the foot.

When progressive pivot turns are repeated without intervening dance-walk steps, it is called "twirling." Twirling requires suppleness and good balance by both partners, besides excellent timing and control on the part of the leader. As a rule, it is done to the right because of the couple's position. A continuous progressive pivot turn left is much more difficult.

In order to travel in a straight line while turning, a couple must alternately step far around each other with the left foot. The position of this foot determines your

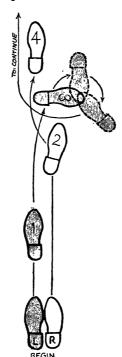


Fig. 14-The Progressive Pivot Turn Right

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Step forward L	S
2—Step forward R while rotating shoulders	S
and foot to right	S
3-Step L far around but close to partner	•
and complete turn. Finish with legs	;
crossed	S
4-Transfer weight to R in place or move R	<u>.</u>
forward a few inches	S

direction. It gives steadiness to the turns to use the heels of both feet instead of only the right. Hold the right feet firmly together. Professional dancers usually lock right knees. To give a stronger lead the right arm is moved



Fig. 15-The Progressive Pivot Turn Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1-Step forward L, rotating shoulders and	
foot to left	S
2-Step R far around and close to partner.	
Transfer weight while pivoting strongly	
left to complete turn. Finish with legs	
crossed	S
3 –Step forward ${f L}$	S
4–Step forward R	S

farther around your partner. At first you may be troubled by dizziness, but continued practice tends to eliminate it. Strive for control rather than a forceful rotation.

Fig. 14 illustrates a progressive pivot turn right. After

a preliminary forward step L, the turn is made in two

counts and finishes with the legs crossed.

A variation of this turn can be made in eight counts as follows: Starting L, dance-walk three steps forward (count 1-2-3). Pivot strongly to the right on the R (count 4). Step back L, completing a half-turn right (count 5). Step back R (count 6). Step back L with toe turned in while rotating shoulders to right (count 7). As you complete turn with legs crossed, transfer weight forward to R (count 8). Uncross feet and repeat.

Fig. 15 shows a corresponding turn to the left. Since it is customary for the man to begin with his L, the turn

is begun without preparatory dance-walk steps.

The progressive pivot left can also be varied by introducing more walking steps. For an eight-count combination, walk forward L—R (count 1-2). Pivot to the left on the L (count 3). Complete a half-turn by stepping back R (count 4). Step back L (count 5). Step back R with toe turned in while rotating shoulders to left (count 6). Step forward L, completing turn (count 7). The legs are now in a crossed position to maintain contact with your partner's L. Uncross legs and step forward R (count 8). The turn can be repeated or alternated with right turns.

THE LEAD

As explained under "Principles of Turning," the lead for pivot turns is indicated by a rotation of the shoulders toward the front foot. The important factor is correct timing. The mistake is often made of first stepping on the pivoting foot and then trying to turn your partner. Then it is too late. The rotation of the shoulders which creates contrary body movement should accompany the forward or backward swing of the leg. The amount of force used is proportionate to the degree of the turn.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Allowing the pivoting feet to separate.

2. Failing to keep your weight evenly divided between your two feet.

3. Bending the knees too much.

- 4. Allowing the body to move forward and backward as in a rock turn.
- 5. Failing to use body torsion by rotating the shoulders.
- 6. Incorrect timing. The rotation of the shoulders should anticipate the turning of the foot.

PRACTICE COMBINATIONS

After acquiring a vocabulary of a few fundamental figures in each rhythm, your next object is to join them in varied and interesting sequences. The sample combinations given in this and the following chapters are for the purpose of suggesting a few of the many possibilities for variation. As you practice these combinations, keep in mind the component parts of the sequence. Try to visualize the pattern of each figure. Learn to separate the fundamental figures from the dance-walk. Also note the overlapping of two figures in certain sequences. With practice, you can soon learn to rearrange the steps and thus create your own combinations while on the dance floor.

The description is for the leader's part. The one following does the converse except where a change of step is noted.

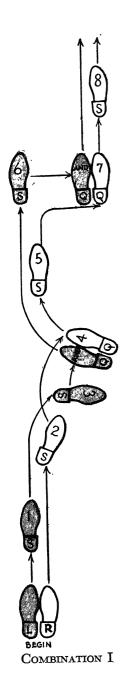
124 Walk Your Way to Better Dancing

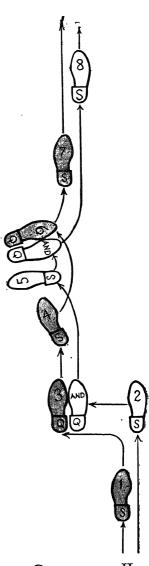
COMBINATION I

Musical Co	unt	Rhythm
	1—Step forward L in L O D	S S
pivot turn right	2—Step forward R, turning right 8—Step L well around partner, completing one-half pivot turn right	eg S
turning	4—Step back R close to L heel continuin turn	g Q
basic step{right	and Close with L continuing right turn 5-Step forward R in L O D completing	
	turn 6–Step forward L	S S
basic step forward	7—Step side R and Close with L 8—Step forward R Repeat or continue with Combination II	Q Q S

COMBINATION II

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Step forward L in L O D	S
2—Step forward R	S
Serie stan (3-Step side L	Q
basic step and Close with R	Q
turning left toward L, turning left toward L	
center of room	S
pivot turn 5—Step around partner R completing on	e-
half turn left	S
hasia star (6-Step back L close to R heel continuing	ng
basic step turn	Q
turning and Close with R continuing left turn	Q
7—Step forward L in L O D	Q S
8—Step forward R	S
Repeat or continue with Combination I	I.





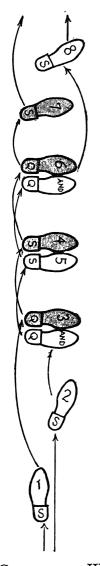
COMBINATION II

COMBINATION III

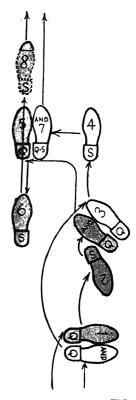
Musical Count	Rhythm
I—Step forward L 2—Step forward R turning right to face wall 3—Step side L and Close with R 4—Step side L side-close basic step sideways 5—Close with R 6—Step side L and Close with R 7—Step side L 8—Cross R over L turning to semi-open position	, s s Q Q s s Q Q s s
Repeat beginning with a side step or continue with Combination IV.	L

COMBINATION IV

Musical Cou	nt	Rhythm
basic step turning right basic step turning right basic step into dip hesitation point	1—Step side L facing wall and Close with R 2—Step back L completing a half turn rig 3—Step back R close to L heel continuin turn and Close with L continuing turn 4—Step forward R completing right turn 5—Step side L and Close with R 6—Step back L with slight bend of knee 7—Transfer weight forward to R 8—Swing L forward and touch toe light to floor From this point the entire sequence	of QQ S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S S
	sixteen measures can be repeated.	



COMBINATION III



COMBINATION IV

The Slow Fox-Trot

Rhythm, 4/4. Tempo, 28 to 33 measures per minute.

Because of the opportunities for greater variation, the slow fox-trot has developed into the most interesting form of the fox-trot rhythms. From the earlier Westchester, with its exaggerated dips and ungraceful postures, the slow fox-trot has evolved into a standard dance with a well-defined technic and fundamental figures. Unless a person understands these foundation steps he will have difficulty in adjusting himself to the slower tempo.

Because the dance-walk is necessarily very slow, approximately a full second for each step, the slow fox-trot is enlivened by the use of more "quick" steps. Whereas there are two "slow" steps to a measure, there can be foun "quick" steps in the same length of time.

four "quick" steps in the same length of time.

Each figure of the slow fox-trot consists of three steps or changes of weight which can be done to one measure of music; the rhythm being quick-quick-slow. The three steps of each figure can be rearranged in various ways to form different patterns. As a means of identification, a name will be given to each figure which more or less describes the particular pattern or movement.

The following list of steps does not include all possible variations in pattern. But they are the most popular ones in use at present, and they provide an ample vocabulary for the average dancer.

The Basic Step
 The Rock-change
 The Twinkle
 The Rock Step
 The Pivot Turn

Each step will first be analyzed separately. Then they will be joined in various ways to form practice combinations. The dance-walk serves as a liaison between figures. Since there are hundreds of possible combinations, only a few representative sequences can be shown here.

Both the man and the girl should first study each figure in all its variations. Excepting the pivot, which is only a turning movement, they can all be done forward, backward, sideways, and turning. Then try joining them in sequences. When the dance-walk is introduced, there will be additional slow steps which must not be confused with the fundamental figures.

Greater variety can be obtained by allowing two or more figures to overlap—that is, the finish of one is the beginning of the next. In such cases there would be four or six quick steps in succession instead of the usual two.

THE BASIC STEP

Since the basic step of the slow fox-trot is identical to that of the medium fox-trot, it is unnecessary to repeat the analysis of the figure. Review carefully all phases of the step as described in Chapter VI.

THE THREE-STEP

Among the more expert dancers the three-step is undoubtedly the most extensively used figure. Briefly, it consists of three steps in the same general direction without bringing the feet to a closed position. Because the feet pass, more ground is covered in the same amount of time, which enlivens the dance. It is especially useful for

exceptionally slow music.

While the basic step always begins with a side-close movement, the three-step may be done directly forward, backward, sideways, or turning. The forward three-step requires good control of the feet. Instead of stepping heel first on all three steps, the heel is used on the first and third steps only, while the second change of weight is made directly onto the ball of the foot. As you practice the figure, say to yourself, "Heel-ball-heel." Transferring weight directly to the ball of the foot on the second step keeps your weight well forward, while using the heel on the first and third steps prevents overbalancing or a sudden checking of the forward movement of the body.

Fig. 1 shows a three-step forward left. Do the same figure starting right and then alternate a number of times until you develop perfect control of the feet and ankles. Repeat to yourself, "Quick-quick-slow," to keep the rhythm, and, "Heel-ball-heel," for control of the feet. Also practice the figure backward, stepping in the usual manner of the backward dance-walk. Next precede the three-step with two walking steps. The rhythm will be slow-slow-quick-quick-slow. Reverse the combination, starting right.

The sideward three-step, if done to your left, is as follows: Turning to a semi-open position, cross R over L (quick); step side L (quick); cross R over L (slow).

The three-step turn is one of the most interesting figures of the slow fox-trot. With practice the same turns can also be used in the medium and fast fox-trots, including the peabody. It is also an important figure in the tango. Likewise, the open-waltz step when done turning is practically the same with the exception of rhythm.

Fig. 2 diagrams a three-step turn left. The figure must be done twice to make a complete turn. Quarter-turns can likewise be made, using four measures or eight

counts for a complete turn.

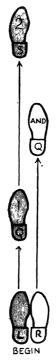


Fig. 1—The Three-step Forward Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step forward L using heel	Q
and—Step forward R on ball of foot	Q
2 —Step forward L using heel	S
Reverse, starting with R.	

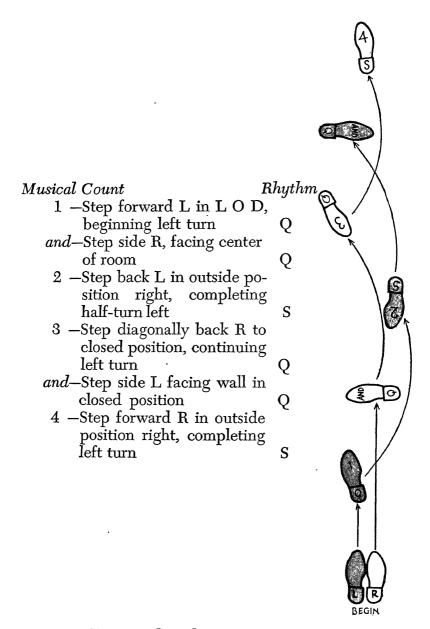


Fig. 2-The Three-step Turn Left

When turning to the left, it is considerably easier to use the outside position right. Conversely, a right turn tends to bring you into the outside position left; although the right turn can also be made in the closed

position without difficulty.

Reverse to the right, using both the closed position and outside position left. Next, make an eight-count combination by preceding each three-step with two dance-walk steps as follows: Step forward L-R (slowslow). Make a half-turn left on the three-step L-R-L (quick-quick-slow). Step diagonally back R to closed position (slow). Step back L (slow). Complete the turn with a three-step R-L-R (quick-quick-slow), finishing in outside position right. To repeat, step diagonally forward L to the closed position.

THE LEAD

If the figure is done correctly with the body poised well forward, no special lead is required except for turns and other changes of direction. When moving directly forward or backward, the change of rhythm will be communicated to your partner through the pressure of the upper body or arm. The lead for turns is based on the same principles as explained in the preceding chapter. When turning into the outside positions, the right arm should be partially released to allow your partner more freedom of movement.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Making the steps choppy by failing to use the foot and ankle correctly. The first and third steps are taken heel first as in the dance-walk, while the second step is on the ball of the foot.

2. Taking the second step too short. It is almost the

same length as the other two steps.

3. Moving the free foot too quickly after the third or slow step. Leave it in place for an instant.

THE ROCK STEP

This figure corresponds to the rock step of the medium fox-trot but has three transfers of weight to a measure instead of two. It consists of a step taken either forward, backward, or sideways, followed by two transfers of weight in place. The rhythm is quick-quick-slow. It is a useful figure when you find it difficult to progress.

For practice, divide your weight evenly between your feet and shift it smoothly from one foot to the other. Allow relaxed knee and hip joints to act as shock absorbers to prevent stiffness and jerky movements. Use

the heel of the forward foot as a stabilizer.

Next combine this figure with dance-walk steps. A three-count combination can be made by preceding the rock with one walking step. To alternate the rock figure, add two preliminary dance-walk steps, making a four-count combination. Note that after taking the two walking steps, another step must be made in the same direction to begin the rock figure.

Fig. 3 shows a forward rock step starting left. Practice the same step beginning with the right and alternate a number of times. Then try it backward, sideways, and

turning.

When turning, keep the forward or pivoting foot in place. The rear foot travels around it as in pivot turns. First make quarter-turns and then half-turns on the three changes of weight. Practice left turns both by stepping forward left and back right; and right turns by stepping either forward right or back left.

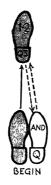


Fig. 3-The Rock Step Forward Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Step L forward. Leave R in place	Q
 and—Transfer weight back to R. As L knee straightens, allow toe to rise slightly 2 —Transfer weight forward to L Reverse by stepping forward R. 	Q S

THE LEAD

Learn to anticipate this figure by at least a full beat of music. As you begin the forward rock step, gradually apply pressure to check your partner's movement, since it is important that the girl does not move her front foot from its position. If the girl does the backward dancewalk incorrectly, failing to use the heel of the forward foot, it is difficult, if not impossible, to lead her into this figure. Stepping backward from the ball of the forward foot instead of the heel will invariably cause her to pull the foot out of position.

After the initial pressure to stop your partner, subsequent leads are given with the right arm and hand or the body according to the direction in which you are moving.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Failing to give the lead in advance. It must pre-

cede the step.

2. Allowing the free foot to move from its position after stopping. The rear foot tends to creep up when you do the forward rock step.

3. Failing to use the heel of the front foot when step-

ping either forward or backward.

4. Holding the knees to stiffly. They must give with

each change of weight.

5. Bending too much in the knees. As the supporting knee breaks slightly, the other leg should straighten.

6. Rocking too much with the upper body. Part of the rock movement is absorbed by the sideward tilting of the pelvis.

THE ROCK-CHANGE STEP

This pattern is a variation of the rock step and has the same rhythm. After doing the first two movements of the rock figure, take a step in the opposite direction from the first. In other words, if you begin the figure by stepping back on your left, you would change your direction by stepping forward left.

Like other fundamental figures it can be done forward, backward, sideways, and turning. Turns can be made in two ways: as a progressive movement similar to a three-step turn, and by doing an "about face" movement on the rock part of the step. The rock-change can also be reversed by first taking a step in any direction and then following it with the rock movement.

Fig. 4 shows the rock-change beginning with a forward rock movement, followed by a step in the opposite direction. Practice starting with the right forward; then reverse the figure by rocking back and changing forward.

The sideward rock-change can be done as follows: Step R to the side (quick); step L in place (quick); cross R over L, turning to a partially open position (slow). Reverse to the left.



Fig. 4—The Rock-change Step Forward Left

Musical Count	Rhyth
1 —Step L forward. Leave R in place	Q
and—Transfer weight back to R	Q
2 —Step L back	S

Step back R to begin a backward rock step and then change your direction by stepping forward R.

THE LEAD

The same lead that would be suitable for the rock step is correct for the first part of the rock-change. After the rock movement the lead depends upon the direction of the following step and the pressure is given accordingly whether with the arm or body.

COMMON MISTAKES

The points enumerated under the rock step apply equally well to this figure.

THE TWINKLE STEP

Logically the twinkle might also be called the "change" step, because primarily it constitutes a change of direction. After stepping forward, backward, or sideways, the feet are brought together and a step is taken in the opposite direction from the first. It is the same as the rock-change with the exception that the feet close on the and count. The twinkle step may be done in any direction and in turning.

Fig. 5 illustrates a twinkle step forward left. Do the same figure starting right and alternate a number of times for practice. Try the step backward and then alternate forward and backward. First practice in the basic rhythm of quick-quick-slow, and then do the forward and backward twinkle with all quick steps. In the latter case, keep the steps short.

Next practice connecting the figure with dance-walk steps. For example, step forward L (slow); forward R (slow); begin the twinkle by stepping forward L (quick); close R (quick); step back L (slow). Reverse

by starting forward R.

Probably the most popular form of the step is the sideward twinkle done as follows: Step R to side (quick); close with L. At the same time rise on balls of both feet and twist body left to a semi-open position (quick); cross R over L (slow). Reverse to left. An interesting combination can be made by first doing the basic foxtrot step to the left and then following it with a sideward twinkle to the right.



Fig. 5-The Twinkle Step Forward Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step L forward	Q
and-Close with R, rising slightly on balls of	f
both feet	Q
2 –Step L back	S
Reverse, starting R.	

THE LEAD

The object is to smoothly check your partner's movement, bring the feet together, and with a smooth transition of weight step in the opposite direction. As you gradually stop your partner, the change of direction can be indicated by a gentle lifting pressure with the right arm, accompanied by a slight rise on the balls of the feet as they are brought together. The girl should be well acquainted with the pattern of the step in order to follow it readily.

The sideward twinkle is easier to both lead and follow. As the feet close on count *and*, rise slightly on the balls of the feet and simultaneously turn your partner to a partially open position with your right hand at her waist.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Failing to bring the feet together evenly on the closing step.

2. Rising too abruptly. The rise and fall of the body

should be smooth and gradual.

3. Failing to use the heel of the front foot when stepping either forward or backward. It gives steadiness and control.

THE PIVOT TURN

The pivot turn of the slow fox-trot can be described briefly as a rotary movement without progression, done to the rhythm of quick-quick-slow. In order fully to understand this figure, review carefully the pivot turn together with the Principles of Turning as explained in the preceding chapter. The only difference is in rhythm. Instead of two transfers of weight to a measure, this figure has three. With practice the turn in this rhythm can also be done to the faster tempo of the medium fox-trot.

THE LEAD

Review the lead for pivot turns in Chapter VI, "The Medium Fox-trot."

COMMON MISTAKES

- 1. Allowing the front foot to move out of position. As in all turns, forward feet are together.
- 2. Swaying forward and backward as you turn. It should be strictly a rotary movement.
 - 3. Failing to use the heel of the forward or pivoting

foot. It gives steadiness and should be used for all pivot turns.

4. Dividing your weight unevenly between the feet.



Fig. 6-The Pivot Turn Left

Musical Count

1 —Step forward L with toe turned out as you rotate shoulders to left

and—Move R around with toe turned in

2 —Step L in place, completing half-turn left

S

Complete left turn by stepping back R with toe turned in (quick); step L in place (quick); step back R (slow).

Fig. 6 illustrates a half-turn left. By repeating the figure a complete turn can be made. Practice the right turn in the same manner, by starting either back on the left or forward right. Notice that this turn is made only in place. If it were done as a progressive step, it would automatically become a three-step turn.

THE DIP

The dip was not included in the list of fundamental figures because primarily it is only a single movement, a bending of the knee. Therefore, it doesn't conform to the definition applicable to the preceding figures: namely, three transfers of weight to a measure of music with the rhythm of quick-quick-slow.

However, the dip is a useful and popular variation. While it is used also in the medium fox-trot, waltz, and tango, the dip is usually associated with the slow foxtrot. When this dance was called the Westchester, the dip was one of its most characteristic (and overdone)

features.

The dipping movement can be added to any of the fundamental figures. But it is more generally used at the finish of the basic step.

THE BACKWARD DIP

Due to the fact that a couple dance a little to each other's right, the man invariably steps back on his left for the dip. Thus they avoid bumping knees. By bringing his partner to the outside position right, the man can also dip back on his right without knee interference.

As the leader takes a normal step backward on the left, he turns the knee outward a little. Then as this knee bends, the forward right leg straightens. After the front knee becomes straight, the right toe may be allowed to rise slightly off the floor. During the bending of the left knee, care must be taken to pull the hips under, thus keeping the lower back flat.

THE FORWARD DIP

The girl, as a rule, dips forward on the right. She must be careful to avoid lunging into the step. By stepping forward heel first the girl is prepared either to continue the dance-walk or to pause and bend the knee, depending upon her partner's lead. As she bends the forward knee, the back leg should straighten, leaving the toe of this rear foot in place.

THE LEAD

The lead for the dip is comparatively simple. Just an easy downward pressure with the right arm as you bend the knee. The girl must be careful to avoid anticipating the dip.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Falling backward or lunging forward. The dip is merely a further bending of the knee after the step is completed.

2. Bumping knees. The leader should rotate his left

knee outward as he dips.

3. Dipping too low. Many dancers exaggerate the movement.

4. Failing to straighten the free leg. Awkward lines

result if both knees remain bent.

5. Allowing the hips to protrude. This also presents an ungraceful appearance.

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	Combination ${f I}$	
Musical Cou	nt	Rhythm
	1-Step forward L	S
	2—Step forward R	S
three-step	3—Step forward L beginning left turn	Q
	and Step side R continuing turn	Q
turning {	4-Step back L in outside position right	ht
left	completing one-half turn left	S
	5-Step diagonally back R to closed pos	si-
	tion continuing left turn	S
basic step sideways	6-Step side L completing three-quart	er
	turn left. You are now facing the wall	
	and Close with R	Q
	7—Step side L	Š
	8-Cross R over L, turning to a semi-ope	en
	position	S
	Continue with Combination II.	

COMBINATION II RhythmMusical Count 1—Step side L, facing wall basic step and Close with R sideways 2-Step side L 3-Step side R opposite to L O D twinkle and Close with L, rising on balls of both feet step Qs QQ and turning to a semi-open position sideways 4-Cross R over L. Girl crosses L over R 5—Step side L in L O D basic step and Close with R sideways 6-Short step side L, turning left to face L O D. Girl steps wide around her partbasic step ner into dip and Close with R 7-Step back L into dip 8-Transfer weight forward to R Continue with Combination III.



Closed position. A couple dance slightly to each other's right.

See page 72.

The dance-walk. The man delays the forward swing of the leg, as the girl prepares to step backward against the heel of her front foot. Both carry their weight forward.

See Chapter III.



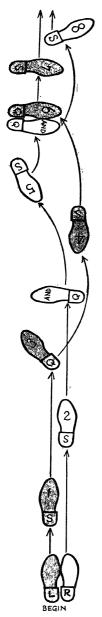
A cross step in a slightly open position.



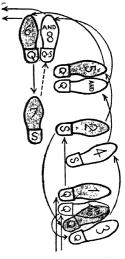


Shoulders are rotated to the right as the leader steps back on his left foot for a right turn.

See Principles of Turning, Chapter VI.



COMBINATION I

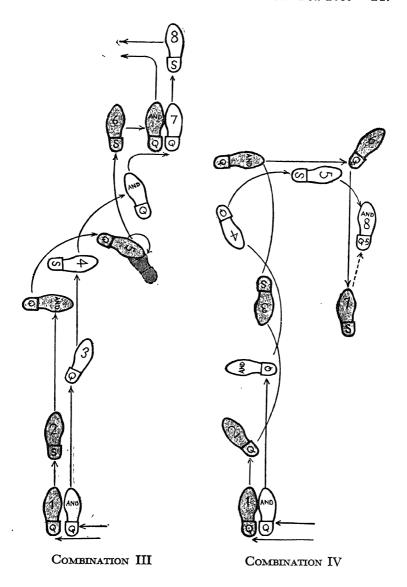


COMBINATION II

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COMBINATION III	
Musical Count	Rhythm
basic step forward 1—Step side L and Close with R 2—Step forward L 3—Step forward R, beginning right turn and Step side L, facing wall 4—Cross R over L, turning to semi-ope	Q Q S Q Q en S
three-step turning right basic step forward and Close with L 8—Step forward R in closed position position 5—Step L around partner to closed position and Step side R facing center of room 6—Step forward L in outside position le completing right turn 7—Short step side R, bringing partner to the closed position and Close with L 8—Step forward R in closed position Continue with Combination IV.	on Q Q eft S

COMBINATION IV RhythmMusical Count 1—Step side L and Close with R left 2-Step forward L beginning left turn and Step side R facing center of room three-step 3-Step back L in outside position right, turning S completing one-half turn left left 4-Step diagonally back R to closed posithree-step tion continuing left turn turning and Step side L facing wall left 5-Step forward R toward wall 6-Step forward L completing left turn rockand Step back R, facing L O D change 7-Step back L with dip in outside position into dip S right 8—Transfer weight forward to R Repeat all four combinations making a total of 32 measures or one chorus of music.



The Fast Fox-Trot (The Peabody)

Rhythm, 4/4. Tempo, 45 to 60 measures per minute.

Most fox-trot music is played at either a medium or slow tempo. A good dancer, however, should be able to adjust his steps to the occasional faster tempo. A simple way is to omit all quick steps. That is, step only on the accented beats, taking two steps to a measure. This would correspond to the outmoded one-step which this dance has replaced. The most appropriate steps—as described in Chapter VI, "The Medium Fox-trot"—would be the side-close, hesitation, and pivot turns. The more expert dancer can also use the basic turns.

There is another style of dancing to this faster tempo which began with the one-step and has retained its adherents for nearly two score years. This dance style is called the peabody—named for a New York City police

captain who made it popular.

The peabody is characterized by fast footwork and extensive use of the outside and open positions. Because changes of weight are made quickly, steps are usually short and taken mostly on the balls of the feet. The man

should develop a firm lead commensurate with the fast turns and changes of position; while the girl must be able to adjust her movements quickly without tensing or losing balance. In order to lead more easily into the quick turns and changes of position, a couple usually dance several inches apart.

The rhythm and pattern of peabody steps differ somewhat from other forms of the fox-trot. In fact, the pattern of the basic figure corresponds to the basic step of the tango. At first glance there would seem to be little in common between the two dances. The tango is slow, with deliberate walking steps. The peabody is almost double the tempo, with quick movements made without use of the heel. But if the basic side-close step of the tango is done entirely on the balls of the feet at about twice the usual tempo, it will approximate the rhythm and pattern of the basic peabody step. In general terms, the fox-trot and the tango are primarily walking dances

while the peabody is a smooth running dance.

Other fundamental steps which are peculiar to the peabody are the forward or backward cross-step, the side-cross, the ball-change, and the paddle turn. The three-step corresponds to the same figure in the foxtrot except that it is done entirely on the balls of the feet

with shorter steps.

As in the slow fox-trot, each step consists of three changes of weight to a measure or two counts of music,

the rhythm being quick-quick-slow.

However, certain steps are often repeated a number of times; especially the side-cross and the ball-change. When the side-cross is done alternately in front and in back, the resulting weaving movement is often called the "grapevine." The ball-change step done turning becomes the "paddle turn." In these cases each change of weight is "quick."

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The following list enumerates the more commonly used peabody steps.

The Basic Step (The Side-close)
 The Cross-step (Forward or Backward)
 The Side-cross (The Three-step Side-cross (The Ball-change Groward or Backward)
 The Side-cross (The Three-step Side-cross (The Paddle Turn Side-cross (The Paddle Turn Side-cross (The Side-cross (Th

THE BASIC STEP (The Side-close)

In pattern this figure corresponds to the side-close step of the tango. It is invariably done to the leader's left. Many dancers, however, instead of bringing the feet together on the slow step, allow them to pass, somewhat in the manner of the side-progressive step of the tango. The pattern then closely resembles a three-step.

Fig. 1 diagrams the side-close left. By preceding this figure with a forward step on the left, we have a three-count combination. This uneven phrasing is typical of the peabody.

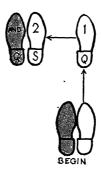


Fig. 1-The Side-close Step Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Step forward R	Q
and—Short side step L	Q
2 -Close with R, or move it forward a few	,
inches	S

THE CROSS-STEP (FORWARD OR BACKWARD)

In this popular figure the man crosses his right foot in back of his left as he moves forward, while his partner crosses the left in front of her right. The leader usually steps diagonally forward to the outside position right before crossing, to permit greater freedom of movement.



Fig. 2-The Cross-step

Musical Count Rh	ythm
 1 —Step diagonally forward L to outside position right and—Cross R back of L. Girl crosses L over R 2 —Step forward L 	Q Q S

THE SIDE-CROSS STEP

If you do the basic side-close step and allow the feet to cross instead of bringing them together, you have the

pattern for the side-cross step. This crossing movement is often repeated a number of times as a couple travel sideways in the L O D. Both may cross in front; or the leader may cross in front while his partner crosses in back; or they may alternate the front and back crossing. The resulting pattern is commonly known as the "grapevine."

Fig. 3 illustrates a side-cross to the left. It can also be done to the right. When you repeat the crossing movement with a series of quick steps, first make a quarterturn to either the right or left so as to continue traveling in the LOD.

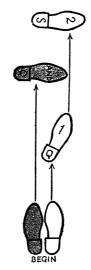


Fig. 3-The Side-cross Step

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 Step forward R (usually making a quar-	-
ter-turn right)	Q
and-Step to side L	Q
2 -Cross R over L. Girl may cross L from	t
or back depending upon the man's lead	l S

THE THREE-STEP

All the three-step patterns described in the preceding chapter, "The Slow Fox-trot," can be adapted to the faster tempo of the peabody by taking shorter steps and dancing more on the balls of the feet. It is the difference between walking and running.



Fig. 4—The Three-step Forward Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step forward L	Ď
and—Step forward R	Q
2 —Step forward L	Š

Reverse by starting R. Precede the figure with a walking step to make a three-count combination. Then add two walking steps and alternate the combination.

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Most of the more intricate turns using the open and outside positions are based on the three-step. This figure should first be mastered at the slower tempos before attempting it in the peabody.

THE BALL-CHANGE STEP

By "ball-change" is meant a movement in which partof your weight is poised momentarily over the ball of one foot and then quickly transferred to the other. In this peabody step the feet are left separated. But in some forms of the ball-change movement, such as occurs in the samba and the Viennese waltz, the feet are brought to a closed position on the change of weight.

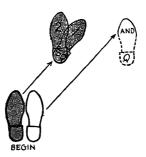


Fig. 5-The Ball-change Step Forward Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Turn your partner to the outside posi	-
tion left and step forward L	Q
and—Place R to side facing partner, putting	7
only part of your weight on ball of R	Q
2 —Transfer weight quickly to L with sligh	t
accent	S
To reverse the figure, turn your page	artner to
the outside position right and stan for	T Lacrona

To reverse the figure, turn your partner to the outside position right and step forward R. Also practice the step backward while your partner moves forward.

THE PADDLE TURN

This is a more advanced figure which is based on the above ball-change movement. The paddle turn consists of a repetition of the ball-change while describing a small circle. The turn is usually made to the left. As the one stepping forward repeats the ball-change in the usual manner, the dancer stepping backward does a reverse paddle turn as follows: Short step to side R (quick); cross L back of R (quick); short step to side R (slow). Instead of two quick steps, a series of six quick steps in succession followed by one slow can be made while moving around each other in a small circle. The forward and reverse paddle turns can be alternated on every fourth count without interrupting the turn. As one steps back the other steps forward. But each keeps the accent on the front foot.

THE LEAD

Because of the fast tempo, quick turns, and extensive use of the open and outside positions, a couple dance several inches apart in the peabody. Consequently, for all backward movements the girl must obtain the lead by resisting with her left hand against the man's right shoulder. The amount of space between them is determined as much by the one following as by the leader.

As in other dances, the man leads with his body while moving forward and indicates turns and changes of direction with his right arm and hand. But due to the greater rapidity of movement, leads should be propor-

tionately stronger.

COMMON MISTAKES

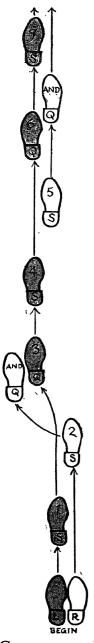
1. Taking steps too long. While the peabody requires considerable area because of its speed, the amount of

COMBINATION I

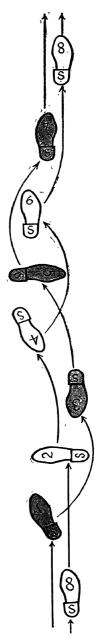
Musical Cou	nt R	hythm
cross-step in back three-step forward	1—Step forward L 2—Step forward R 3—Step diagonally forward L to outside position right and Cross R back of L. Girl crosses L over R 4—Step forward L in outside position 5—Step forward R in outside position 6—Step forward L returning to closed position and Step forward R 7—Step forward L	ss QQss QQs
	If this combination is repeated, count 7 becomes count 1. This uneven phrasing is often used in the peabody. By continuing with Combination II, the steps can be phrased evenly in four measures each. 8—Step forward R	s

COMBINATION II

Musical Count	RI	hythm
	1—Step forward L beginning left turn 2—Step side R facing center of room and	S
Ì	continuing left turn	S
progres-	8—Step back L in outside position right completing one-half turn left	S
sive left turn	4—Step diagonally back R to closed position continuing left turn	S
using outside .	5—Step side L facing wall and continuing left turn	S
position right	6—Step forward R in outside position right completing turn 7—Step diagonally forward L to closed	S
	position Tolkard II to closed	S
ļ	8—Step forward R	S
	Repeat or continue with Combination III.	



COMBINATION I



COMBINATION II

COMBINATION III

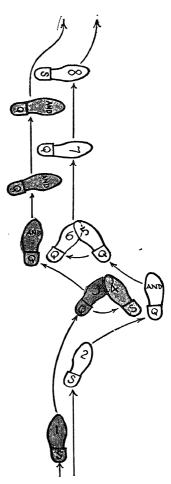
Musical Count	Rhythm
progres- sive right turn using outside position left 1—Step forward L 2—Step forward E open position 3—Step forward L 4—Step forward R 5—Step L around tion turning right 6—Step side R faci continuing right 7—Step forward L i 8—Step diagonally position	S and turn partner to S in open position S beginning right turn S partner to closed position S ng center of room and

COMBINATION IV

Musical	Count	Rhythm
	1—Step forward L2—Step forward R turning partner to out side position left	S - S
ball-	3-Step forward L in outside position left and Step to side on ball of R, but without	: Q
change step	completely transferring weight 4—Transfer weight quickly to L while turning to closed position	Q e S
ball-	5—Turn partner and step forward R in out side position right	- O
change step	and Step to side on ball of L without completely transferring weight 6—Transfer weight quickly to R while	Q
side-	turning to closed position and Step to side L facing wall in closed posi	Q
cross	tion	Q
step	7-Cross R over L. Girl crosses L back of F	Q
	and Step to side L 8—Cross R over L. Girl crosses L back of]	R S



COMBINATION III



COMBINATION IV

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space covered can be modified by taking comparatively short steps.

2. Making uneven, jerky movements. Like all dances, the peabody should be done smoothly. Ankles and knees must be kept supple and relaxed. Do not attempt the figures at this fast tempo until you can do them easily at a slower tempo.

The Waltz

Rhythm, 3/4. Tempo, American, 30 to 40 measures per minute; Viennese, 40 to 64 measures per minute.

A FTER surviving a century and a half of vicissitudes, the waltz is still the queen of ballroom dances. The reason for this continued success is easily explained. Music that is simple in structure and melodious to the ear has its counterpart in a basic dance step that is likewise simple, yet graceful and interesting. Music and dance complement each other perfectly.

Contrary to general belief, the waltz permits of endless variation. Practically any dance pattern used in the fox-trot can be adapted to the waltz simply by changing

the rhythm to conform to the 3/4 time.

Instead of enumerating all possible waltz steps that correspond to similar fox-trot figures, emphasis will be placed on variations in rhythm. That is, most waltz steps are done to one of three rhythmical patterns:

(1) Stepping on each beat of the measure. To this rhythm can be done the basic waltz, the open-waltz, the

rock step, the twinkle step, pivot turns, etc.

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(2) Stepping on the accented first beat only, which

gives us the hesitation in various forms.

(3) Stepping on the first and third beats of a measure, which is "canter" rhythm. Steps in canter rhythm also can be done forward, backward, sideways, rocking, turn-

ing, etc.

There is a fourth possible waltz rhythm in which you walk evenly, giving two counts to each step. This offbeat walk lacks accent, however, and gives the effect of being out of time with the music. Since it is difficult enough for many dancers to keep on the accented beat, it is not advisable to attempt unorthodox variations.

Still other unusual rhythms can be obtained by taking extra steps between the three even beats of each measure and using the count of and. While intricate steps of this kind may be used by the expert, the average dancer should make it a point to step exactly on the beat.

THE BASIC STEP

As the basic step of the fox-trot is the keynote of that dance, similarly this figure is the essence of the waltz. While there are many opportunities for variations in rhythm and pattern, the accomplished dancer always returns to this fundamental step.

As a frame should enhance a picture, the basic dance figure should harmonize with the rhythmical pattern of the accompanying music. Waltz music and step have this affinity. You will notice that the first beat of each measure is given a heavier accent. For that reason the first step of the basic figure is likewise accented. Since it would be awkward to accent a side step, this first movement of the foot is made either directly forward or backward-that is, at right angles to the axis of the shoulders. For the second step the foot is placed about twelve to fifteen inches to the side on a line with the shoulders, while the third step brings the feet together. When the basic figure is done alternately forward and backward, a rectangular pattern is described. This is commonly known as the "box" step and is the basis for waltz turns.

If the side-close figure of the medium fox-trot has been practiced, you have already learned the pattern of the basic waltz step. Besides pattern, however, another factor must be considered: style, or the manner of executing a step that helps to differentiate it from similar figures done to other rhythms. It is because the distinctive technic of the waltz is less natural to acquire than the more simple dance-walk of the fox-trot, that the author does not believe it advisable to begin dance instruction with this rhythm. As the crawl has replaced the breast-stroke as a logical introduction to the art of swimming, so the fox-trot, instead of the older waltz rhythm, is the natural, streamlined approach to dancing.

The distinctive manner of executing a waltz step is determined by the music. As stated before, the first beat of each measure is strongly accented. The most effective way of accenting this beat is by taking a long step either forward or backward. At the beginning of a waltz figure both knees are straight. In order to take a step of sufficient length without losing balance, it is necessary to bend slightly the supporting knee. Simultaneously the moving leg is swung either forward or backward from the hip. Thus you will notice that two movements are made at the same time. While the free leg is swung from the hip with the knee straight, the supporting knee is being slightly flexed. The length of the step is determined by the degree of bend in this supporting knee. A person with short legs must necessarily flex the knee more than a long-legged person for the same length step. However, he will not appear shorter provided he keeps

the moving leg extended, since the line from head to toe remains unbroken.

Let us analyze a complete forward waltz figure. With your weight poised over the balls of the feet, allow the left foot to glide forward with the leg extended and simultaneously bend the right knee sufficiently to maintain balance. Keep the ankle of the moving leg relaxed, thus allowing the toe to rise slightly an instant before weight is transferred to the foot. To complete the step the weight rolls smoothly from the heel to the ball of the foot, accompanied by a lifting movement of the body due to the fact that this leg is kept extended as it receives weight.

The right leg is now relaxed and allowed to swing in close to the supporting left leg and in one continuous movement is placed a short distance to the side on a line

with the left.

After transferring the weight to the right foot, the left leg is again relaxed and drawn easily to the right. This movement may be accompanied by a slight lifting of the heels. Each waltz figure finishes with both legs straight. To begin the next figure the heels are lowered and the right foot glides forward as the left knee bends.

The backward waltz figure is fundamentally the same as the forward. Care must be taken to keep the weight well forward over the balls of the feet while stepping backward. Avoid bending the moving leg. As weight is transferred to the rear foot, allow the front knee to straighten gradually and then press against the heel of

that foot.

Years ago it was considered poor form to allow the heels to touch the floor at any time in the waltz. But with the slower tempoed American waltz, as with the slow fox-trot and tango, much better balance and control are obtained by using the heel of the forward foot whether stepping forward or backward.

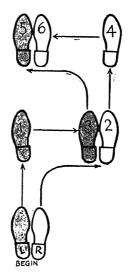


Fig. 1-The Basic Step Forward

- 1—Long step forward L with straight knee as R bends sufficiently for balance.
- 2-Relax R bringing it close to L and step about twelve inches to the side.
- 3—Close slowly with L. Finish with both knees straight.
- 4-Long step forward R as L knee bends.
- 5-Relax L and bring close to R before stepping to side.
- 6—Close slowly with R.

Repeat a number of times in a forward direction and then practice waltzing backward.

The general effect produced by a couple waltzing should be that of a gentle undulating motion while giving the illusion of dancing without bending the knees. This effect can be given so long as the moving leg is kept extended, since the eye tends to follow an object in motion.

Thus while the rhythm and pattern of the basic waltz figure are comparatively simple, you can readily appreciate the fact that it requires unusually good timing and co-ordination to bring out the beauty and grace for which the waltz is famous.

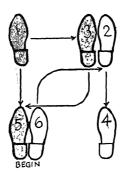


Fig. 2-The Waltz Square

Musical Count

- 1-Long step forward L.
- 2-Step R to side.
- 3-Close with L.
- 4-Long step back R.
- 5-Step L to side.
- 6-Close with R.

Practice this box pattern with particular observation of the waltz technic as previously explained. Then reverse the square by waltzing back L and forward R.

The waltz, like the basic fox-trot step, should be practiced forward, backward, and turning. Fig. 1 shows the basic step repeated in a forward direction. Practice the same step backward. The man and girl alike should be capable of waltzing equally well in either direction.

The basic figure, when done alternately forward and backward, as shown in Fig. 2, describes a square or box pattern which should be practiced as a preliminary exercise for turns.

Fig. 3 shows the quarter-turns which correspond to the quarter-turns of the basic fox-trot. Note, however, that each waltz figure finishes with the feet together while the fox-trot step finishes with the feet apart.

Figs. 4 and 5 show complete turns made in two measures instead of the four for the quarter-turns. In order to alternate these progressive turns, it is necessary to waltz one measure either directly forward or backward without turning. This in-between measure is usually referred to as the "connecting link."

Practice quarter-turns right in the same manner. If the forward and backward steps are of equal length, you will start and finish in approximately the same spot. After perfecting the turns by yourself, using the four walls as landmarks, try them with a partner. While keeping in mind your general directions, stress the relative position of your own and your partner's feet. On each forward and backward step feet that are diagonally opposite should almost brush.

Waltz directly forward one measure L-R-L and then reverse turn to the right. When alternating turns left and right, it is not necessary always to make a complete turn. That is, you may finish a left turn facing diagonally toward the wall, while a right turn may be finished fac-

ing diagonally toward the center of the room.

As previously noted, partners alternately travel around each other while turning. Therefore the one waltzing forward takes a comparatively wide step to move around his partner, while the one doing the backward waltz figure practically eliminates the side step in order to serve as a pivoting center. The first step is always long and accented, regardless of the degree of turn.

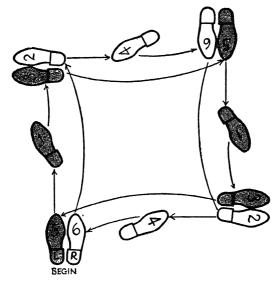


Fig. 3—The Basic Step, Quarter-turns

- 1-Rotate shoulders to the left as you take long step directly forward L in L O D with toe turned out.
- 2-Step R to side, facing center of room.
- 3—Close with L, completing quarter-turn left.
- 4-Long step directly back R with toe turned in as you continue to rotate shoulders.
- 5-Step L to side, facing opposite to L O D.
- 6-Close with R, completing half-turn left.

The following two measures are a repetition of the first two.

- 1-Long step forward L opposite to L O D, turning shoulders and foot to left.
- 2-Step R to side facing wall.
- 3-Close with L, completing a three-quarter turn.
- 4-Long step back R with toe turned in as shoulders continue to rotate.
- 5-Step L to side, facing L O D.
- 6—Close with R, completing turn.

- 1—Long step forward L with toe turned out as you rotate shoulders to left.
- 2—Continue turn by stepping well around with R to the side of L on a line with the axis of the shoulders. The position of this foot determines the extent of the turn.
- 3—Close with L, completing a half-turn left.
- 4—Long step directly back R in L O D with toe turned in. Shoulders continue to rotate to the left.
- 5-Step L back of and close to R heel, continuing turn.
- 6—Transfer weight to R, completing turn and facing L O D.



Fig. 4-The Basic Step, Half-turns Left

1-Long step forward R, rotating shoulders and foot to right.

2-Step L wide around and to the side of Ron a line with the axis of the shoulders.

3-Close with R, completing a half-turn right.

4-Long step directly back L with toe turned in-that is, at right angles to the axis of the shoulders, which continue to rotate.

5-Step R just back of L heel, continuing turn.

6—Transfer weight to L as you complete turn.

Repeat turn or waltz directly forward R-L-R and then reverse turn to left.

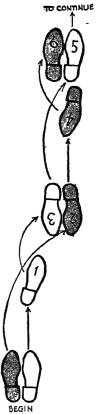


Fig. 5-The Basic Step, Half-turns Right



When there is no change in the pattern of the step, the lead is comparatively simple: a slight pressure with the arm to indicate the side-close movement. The lead for turns follows the principles governing all turns in the closed position as explained in Chapter VI.

It is important that the one following be able to regulate the length of her step in accordance with her partner's lead. Therefore the girl should practice waltzing by herself as much as possible to acquire balance and a clear concept of the patterns.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Failing to accent the first step.

2. Lunging into the step with a bent knee, caused by failure to bend the supporting knee for balance.

3. Stepping diagonally forward or backward, especially on turns. The first step of the waltz is taken at right angles to the axis of the shoulders before they are rotated.

4. Rising too abruptly as weight is transferred on the first step. The transition should be smooth and gradual.

5. Moving the foot in an oblique line when stepping to the side. Bring it close to the supporting foot before taking the side step.

6. Placing this foot diagonally forward or backward

instead of directly to the side.

7. Closing too quickly. The closing step receives a full beat of music.

THE OPEN-WALTZ STEP

The open-waltz is an easy and effective way of adding variety to the three-quarter rhythm. It is also useful for maneuvering on a crowded floor. Exhibition ballroom dancers use it almost exclusively instead of the basic step, as it provides greater freedom of expression for the more elaborate combinations. On the ballroom floor, however, it should not be used excessively, as the basic step is still the keynote of the waltz.

In pattern the open-waltz corresponds to the threestep of the fox-trot. But the author is giving it a much broader interpretation. As previously mentioned, the open-waltz can roughly be defined as a figure consisting of three transfers of weight to a measure in which the feet are not brought to a closed position. It can thus be used to include pivot turns, rock steps, the rock-change, etc. In fact, all patterns of the slow fox-trot figures, with the exception of the basic step, can be done in this rhythm.

Fig. 6 shows the open-waltz forward left. Practice alternating it with the open-waltz right. Learn to do the step equally well both forward and backward. When practicing with music, be sure that the first step of the figure coincides with the accented first beat of the measure. This first step can be emphasized by making it a little longer and stepping heel first, while the two steps following are taken on the balls of the feet.

Next try combining the open-waltz with the basic figure as follows: Step forward L-R-L (count 1-2-3); step forward R to begin the basic figure (count 4); step side L (count 5) close with R (count 6). Reverse the combination by doing the open-waltz right and the basic step left. Then make a combination of four measures by doing two open-waltz steps forward followed by two basic waltz figures.

The open-waltz can be done sideways similarly to the three-step as follows: Begin facing the wall and cross R over L (count 1); step L to side (count 2); cross R over L (count 3). As both cross in front, turn your partner to a semi-open position.

Open-waltz turns follow the patterns of the three-step turns. Fig. 7 illustrates a turn to the left. Practice these turns in all their phases-that is, making quarter- and half-turns both left and right, starting either forward or backward.

A right turn can be made in the same manner by using the outside position left, and also in the closed position. By substituting the basic waltz step for one of

- 1—Long step forward L, using heel. At same time slightly bend R knee for balance.
- 2—Step forward R on ball of foot with gradual rising movement.
- 3—Step forward L on ball of foot. Both knees are now straight.

Reverse by taking long step forward R accompanied by slight flexion of L knee, and follow with two shorter steps L-R (count 4-5-6).

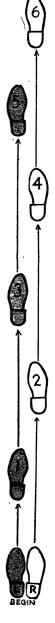


Fig. 6-The Open-waltz Forward Left

- 1—Long step forward L in L O D, beginning left turn.
- 2-Step R to side, facing center of room.
- 3—Step back L in outside position right, completing half-turn left.
- 4—Step diagonally back R to closed position, continuing left turn.
- 5-Step side L, facing wall.
- 6—Step forward R in outside position right, completing left turn.

To return to the closed position, step L diagonally forward close to your partner's left.

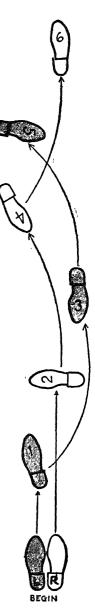


Fig. 7-The Open-waltz Turn Left

the open-waltz figures, you can work out several interesting variations.

THE LEAD

Leads for the open-waltz steps are practically the same as for corresponding figures in the slow fox-trot, while making allowances for the difference in rhythm.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Failing to begin the figure on the accented first beat of the measure.

2. Closing with the feet on either the second or third

steps.

3. Beginning the basic waltz figure with a side step after completing the open-waltz. The basic figure always begins with either a forward or backward step.

THE HESITATION

The hesitation is one of the most popular and useful of the waltz variations. It can be defined broadly as just the first step of the waltz; the second and third counts being held. After this step is taken on the accented first beat of the measure, there are several possibilities regarding the free foot. It may be left in place as in a rock step; it may be brought even with the supporting foot to what is known as the "arch" position; or the free leg may swing through to the "point" position, in which the leg is extended with the toe lightly touching the floor.

This hesitation-point, with both legs extended, gives more attractive lines to the body and is more commonly used by the better dancers. The arch position with feet together is easier for beginners, but later the leg should

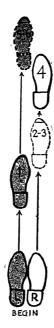


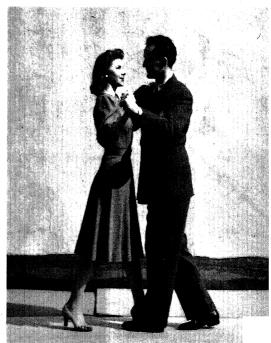
Fig. 8-Hesitation-point Forward Left and Right

- 1-Step forward L with straight knee as you bend R knee sufficient to maintain balance.
- 2-Swing R forward as body gradually rises.
- 3-Touch R toe forward with both legs extended.
- 4-Break in L knee as you simultaneously swing R forward and transfer weight.
- 5-Relax L and allow it to swing forward with gradual rising movement of the body.
- 6-Touch L toe forward as both legs straighten. Practice the hesitation-point backward and then alternate, forward L and back R, and reverse.



Turning into the outside position left. When this turn is completed shoulders should be parallel.

See page 158.



In the peabody partners dance several inches apart. See page 149.

Beginning a waltz turn left. The supporting knee bends slightly as the free leg is swung from the hip.

See page 168.





Hesitation-point in the outside position right.

See page 175.

be allowed to follow through in the direction in which you are moving. For example, if you pause with your weight on the right while moving backward, allow the free left leg to continue its backward swing until fully extended with the toe lightly touching the floor.

Although less commonly used, the hesitation can also be done sideways and the free foot drawn to the arch position. You can also turn on a hesitation. Quarterturns are often made in this way, especially in the Viennese waltz, in which, due to the faster tempo, the free

foot is brought only to the arch position.

Fig. 8 illustrates the forward hesitation-point left and right. Take the step as if beginning a basic waltz figure, and then hold the following two counts instead of finishing with a side-close. The toe that is pointing must receive no weight, because that foot always begins the next step, which may be made either forward or backward. Since the hesitation finishes with both legs straight, the following step is accented and lengthened by a subtle downward movement of the body as the supporting knee bends to maintain balance.

THE LEAD

As for the hesitation of the medium and fast fox-trot, try to anticipate the step and give a firm lead which leaves no doubt as to your intention. Since both the hesitation and the basic step begin the same way, make a clear distinction between the two, either by holding your partner firmly if you decide to pause, or giving a definite sideward pressure with the right arm or hand to indicate the side-close of the waltz step.

Regarding the position of the free foot during the hesitation, the one following may have a little difficulty when dancing for the first time with a new partner. If you are moving backward, it is advisable to fully extend the free leg backward in order to be on the safe side and avoid bumped knees. You can also be assured of creating attractive lines of the body.

COMMON MISTAKES

- 1. Failing to pause on the accented first beat of a measure.
- 2. Putting weight on the toe that is pointing. The folfollowing step must begin with this foot.
- 3. Indefinite movements of the free foot. Decide on its position and then execute the movement in a definite, finished manner.
- 4. Swinging the free leg forward or backward too quickly. It should be a smooth, relaxed movement.
- 5. Rising too abruptly on count 1. The lifting movement should be gradual and even.

THE CANTER WALTZ

Thus far two different waltz rhythms have been discussed. First, the basic and open-waltz figures, in which three even transfers of weight are made to a measure; and second, the hesitation, in which only one step is taken to a measure.

We now come to a third rhythm—the canter waltz, with two changes of weight to a measure, occurring on the first and third beats. When this canter step is repeated, it begins each time with the same foot. It was probably the similarity of this uneven movement to the one-sided canter gait of the schooled horse that gave the figure its name. Among the more proficient dancers it has been a popular step for many years.

The canter requires rather careful timing and a good sense of rhythm, especially on the part of the leader. While the rhythm of the step does not change, there is

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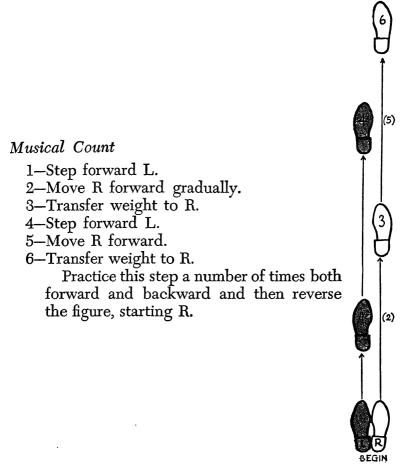


Fig. 9-Canter Step Forward Left

ample opportunity for variations in pattern. It furnishes an excellent means of adding variety to your waltz.

While an early form of the canter was made with steps of uneven length accompanied by a dipping movement, the modern version stresses smooth, even steps. Although the two transfers of weight in the canter receive an unequal amount of time, they should be approxi-

mately of the same length and taken in the manner

of the dance-walk.

Fig. 9 shows two canter steps forward on the left. Also practice the figure starting right. Then try alternating the canter with the basic step as follows: Step forward L (count 1); move R forward slowly (count 2); step forward R (count 3); then begin the basic step by stepping forward L (count 4); step side R (count 5); close with L (count 6). Reverse by starting the canter R and follow with a waltz step R. Next, in place of the basic waltz step substitute a hesitation.

THE LEAD

Since the first step of the canter is a delayed movement and receives two counts, the beginning of the lead is practically the same as that given for the hesitation. But after holding for the second count, be prepared to transfer your weight on the third beat of the measure by carrying your body well forward. Variations in pattern are led in the same manner as corresponding figures in other rhythms.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Producing a limping effect by making the first step long and the second one short. Steps should be approximately the same length.

2. Delaying the second step too long. After stepping on count 1, the free foot should gradually be moved into

position ready to receive weight on count 3.

THE VIENNESE WALTZ

When the Johann Strausses, father and son, began composing their famous waltzes in the middle and latter

part of the nineteenth century, it established Vienna as the waltz capital of the world. Melodies such as "The Blue Danube" and "Tales from the Vienna Woods" have never lost their appeal. And the Viennese waltz is now experiencing a renaissance.

The difference in technic between the modern and the Viennese waltz is due primarily to tempo. If both were played at the same rate of speed, they would be danced in the same manner. But since most Viennese waltzes are played at a tempo half again as fast, or even double the time of our modern waltzes, certain modifications of the basic step are necessary.

To begin with, there is less opportunity for variation. The Viennese waltz is based on rapid, progressive right or left turns. To reverse the turns and to add variation, the hesitation is used. Some dancers also employ the

canter step.

In order to do the waltz turns smoothly and without too visible an effort, a certain technic is used which is unnecessary at the slower tempo. As explained in Chapter VI under "The Principles of Turning," a couple alternately rotate around each other. The one waltzing forward travels around his partner, who acts as a pivoting center. That is, you step back on count 1 and hold counts 2 and 3. In other words, the backward waltz step becomes a hesitation. For example, if you are turning to the left, you first waltz forward left, traveling around your partner while making a half-turn. You then step back right to continue the turn. But instead of adding a side-close movement, simply place the ball of the left foot in back of and close to the right as you pivot and complete the turn. Thus on every other waltz step you are able to eliminate two quick transfers of weight which would cause needless effort.

Besides the pivoting action on the second half of each turn, another energy-saving device can be employed in

the forward part of the turn. In a left turn, for example, you first step forward left to begin the turn, then place the ball of the right foot to the side as for all basic waltz turns. But instead of transferring your entire weight to it, put only about half your weight on the right and then pull the left to the right with a quick, half-sliding motion. This movement is a form of the ball-change as described in Chapter VIII under the peabody. Instead of leaving the feet separated as in the latter dance, the ball-change is made with a closing movement in the waltz. Since this closing movement is made quickly, the side step is usually held a fraction of a beat longer than it would be otherwise. Take care to avoid a bouncing effect as exemplified by exponents of the old-fashioned, fast German waltzes; and also evident in the 2/4 time of the Brazilian samba.

Fig. 10 illustrates a waltz turn left. The dotted outline of the left footprint on the last half of the turn indicates that this foot receives little or no weight. It serves as a cane to help control balance. The position of this foot varies with different dancers. Some cross it in back of the supporting foot, while others keep the feet close together and parallel.

Practice progressive turns to the right in the same manner. To reverse a turn, use the hesitation. For example, after completing a left turn, step forward left on count 1 and hold counts 2 and 3 with the free right foot in either the arch or point position. You are now ready to begin a right turn by stepping forward right.

While left turns are more effective, they are difficult to execute on corners or when traveling in a small circle. At those times, it is better to change to a right turn. If there is no room for progression, quarter-turns can be used; or simply a forward and backward hesitation step, using the arch position.

- 1—Step forward L, beginning left turn.
- 2—Place ball of R to side, continuing turn. Put only a portion of your weight on the R.
- 3—Pull L to R with a quick, sliding motion, completing half-turn left.
- 4-Step back R, continuing turn.
- 5—Place ball of L in back of R; no weight.
- 6—Complete left turn.

L is free to repeat the turn or to step forward in a hesitation to reverse the turn.

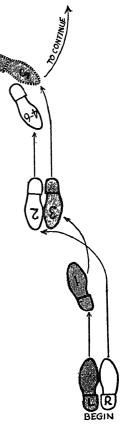


Fig. 10-Waltz Turn Left

THE LEAD

As in the peabody a couple usually dance a few inches apart to permit greater freedom of movement. Like twirling, the rapid rotation produces a centrifugal force which tends to separate them. The leader, therefore, holds his partner more firmly with his right arm to offset this pressure.

As long as turns continue in the same direction, leading is not difficult. But to reverse a turn, usually on a

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COMBINATION I

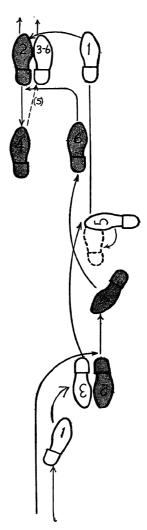
Musical Count	
_	1-Long step forward L beginning left turn 2-Step R side facing center of room and
open-waltz turn left	continuing turn
	3-Step back L in outside position right completing one-half turn left
}	4-Step diagonally back R to closed posi-
basic step	tion continuing left turn
turning \(^{-}\)	5-Step back L close to R heel continuing
left	turn
l	6—Close with R completing left turn
canter	1—Step forward L
step	2-Move R forward slowly
forward	3—Transfer weight to R
}	4-Long step forward L
hesitation	5—Swing R forward slowly
point	6-Touch R toe forward. Finish with both
-	knees straight
	Continue with Combination II.

COMBINATION II

	COMBINATION II
Musical Count	
basic step turning right	 1—Long step forward R beginning right turn 2—Step around partner with L continuing turn 3—Close with R completing one-half turn right
open-waltz turn right	 4—Long step back L continuing right turn 5—Step side R facing center of room and continuing turn 6—Step forward L in outside position left, completing right turn 1—Long step forward R
basic step forward	2—Step side L returning to closed position 8—Close with R
dip in canter rhythm	 4—Step back L in modified dip 5—Hold position 6—Transfer weight forward to R Repeat Combinations I and II or continue with Combination III.



COMBINATION I



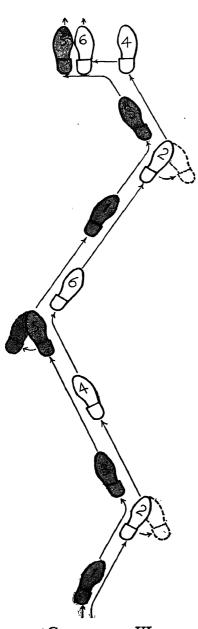
COMBINATION II

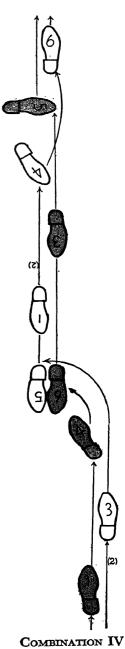
COMBINATION III

	COMBINATION 222
Musical Count	
open- waltz step	 1—Turn partner to outside position left and step forward L 2—Step forward R while turning to closed position 3—Continue turning partner to outside position right and step forward L
open- waltz step	 4—Step forward R in outside position right 5—Step forward L while turning to closed position 6—Continue turning partner to outside position left and step forward R
open- waltz step basic step forward	 1—Step forward L in outside position left 2—Step forward R as you turn to closed position 3—Step forward L in closed position. 4—Step forward R 5—Step side L 6—Close with R Repeat or continue with Combination IV.

	Combination IV
Musical Count	t e
canter	1—Step forward L
step {	2-Swing R forward slowly
forward	3-Transfer weight forward to R
}	4-Long step forward L beginning left turn
basic step	5-Step well around partner with R con-
turning {	tinuing turn
left	6-Close with L completing one-half turn
Į.	left
canter	1-Step back R
step {	2-Move L back slowly
backward	3-Transfer weight back to L
۲	4-Step back R beginning left turn
open-	5-Step side L facing wall and continuing
waltz	turn
turning	6-Step forward R in outside position right
left	completing left turn
	Repeat by stepping diagonally forward
	L to return to the closed position. The
	four combinations done twice through
	require 32 measures or one chorus of
/	↑ _

music.





COMBINATION III

hesitation as previously explained, the man must have good balance and be able to hold his partner firmly.

Another important factor is the ability of the leader to equalize each half of the turn. Unless the man allows his partner to remain in one spot as he travels around her on the first half of the turn, she will be obliged to take a side step or be thrown off balance. While the leader can easily pivot as he steps backward on the last half of the turn, he should give his partner an equal opportunity while he is doing the first half.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Failing to accent the first beat of the measure. The pattern of the Viennese waltz is basically the same as that of the slower tempo.

2. Producing a bouncing effect. Strive for smoothness, with only a suggestion of rise and fall of the body.

3. Failing to pivot on the second half of the turn. If three changes of weight are made, it soon becomes tiring and appears labored.

The Tango

Rhythm, 2/4. Tempo, 28 to 34 measures per minute.

During the past three decades the tango has passed through a process of evolution and adaptation, primarily via Paris, until it has become one of the most perfect of ballroom dances. That is, perfect from the standpoint of stimulating music, simplicity of fundamental steps, ease of execution, adaptability to crowded floors, and attractiveness of style. While the Argentine gaucho might never recognize this modern version as his creation, yet we are indebted to this South American country for one of our most fascinating dances.

In tempo, modern tango music is similar to that of the slow fox-trot. The difference is mainly one of accent. This can readily be appreciated by listening to and comparing the two types of music. If tango music is not accented correctly, it may have a fox-trot "swing" which makes it practically indistinguishable from the latter.

Likewise, care must be taken to avoid lapsing into a fox-trot manner of dancing the tango if you wish to retain the character and style of the dance. While many of the basic steps are identical in pattern to those of the slow fox-trot, yet there is a distinct difference in the manner of execution, which can only be described inadequately as the "feel" of the music. For that reason, the written description cannot compensate for expert,

personal instruction.

However, certain differences can be pointed out that may help you to acquire the intriguing tango style. The primary difference is in the dance-walk. While the dance-walk of the fox-trot is a free swinging movement of the leg, the foot skimming the floor with a minimum of knee action, the dance-walk of the tango is more deliberate, with a partial lifting of the foot in stepping. This results in a more pronounced use of the knee. In fact, the dance-walk of the tango more closely resembles natural walking than that of any other ballroom dance. As in the fox-trot, balance and smoothness are obtained by making full use of the foot. That is, all forward steps are taken heel first. But avoid letting the toe rise noticeably off the floor.

Another factor that adds greatly to the effectiveness of the tango is the frequent use of pauses or sudden breaks in the movement which may be held for a full count, usually with the feet together. For this reason the basic fox-trot step is not used in the tango; but instead the side-close or side-draw step, which have the same rhythm but finish with the feet in a closed position.

A third factor which helps to create the characteristic tango style is dependent upon posture and carriage. Avoid all unnecessary movement of the upper body. Give an effect of immobility without producing a feeling of stiffness. The man's left hand is brought closer to the body, forming a right angle or less at the elbow. This helps to give steadiness to the upper body and firmness to the leads. Movements are decisive without being jerky. The leader should give the impression of knowing

exactly when, where, and how each step is to be taken, and then executing it with crisp, definite movements and a feeling of perfect control. Of course, these principles apply equally well to all dance forms. But whereas the steps of the fox-trot, waltz, and rumba blend imperceptibly with a continuous flow of movement, the tango is punctuated with deliberate pauses.

Like the slow fox-trot, the tango is composed of a few fundamental figures which can be rearranged to form innumerable combinations. These figures may be combined directly, or joined by walking steps. As in the slow fox-trot, the overlapping of figures often occurs, so that there may be four or six "quick" steps together

instead of only two.

The following are the most useful of the fundamental figures. Instead of irrelevant Spanish terms, they have been given names which most accurately describe the movement or pattern.

- 1. The Basic Step (The Side-close and Side-draw)
- 2. The Side-progressive
- 3. The Rock Step
- 4. The Rock-change
- 5. The Three-step Turn6. The Pivot Turn

THE BASIC STEP

In reality, there are two basic steps, due to the fact that weight is not transferred to the closing foot on one side. When the leader closes to his left and his partner to her right, weight is transferred to the closing foot and it is called the side-close step. But when the feet are brought together to the man's right or the girl's left, it is termed the side-draw because no weight is placed on the closing foot. This latter movement is often used in preparation for a step to the side.

Apart from style, it is the difference in the patterns

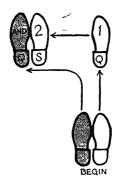


Fig. 1-The Side-close Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Step forward R	Q
and—Short step to side L	Q S
2 —Close with R	S
Precede this figure with a dance-	-
walk step L. The rhythm then is slow-	-
quick-quick-slow. Practice this combi-	-
nation both forward and backward	•
Then do it sideways as follows:	
1 —Begin facing wall and step L to side	S
2 —Turn partner to a partially open posi-	•
tion and cross R over L	Q
and—Uncross L and take short step to side	Q
3 –Close with R and return to closed posi-	
tion	S

of the basic steps that differentiate the slow fox-trot and the tango. The basic fox-trot step begins with a sideclose and finishes with the feet separated. The basic figure of the tango, on the other hand, begins with a forward or backward step and finishes with the feet together. Both have the same rhythm of quick-quickslow. But since the occasional cessation of movement in the tango is in keeping with the character of the music, it is more effective to make this pause with the feet together rather than separated.

Fig. 1 shows a diagram of the side-close step. It is done, as a rule, to the leader's left. Fig. 2 illustrates the side-draw, which is done only to the man's right or the girl's left. Both figures can be done forward, backward, and turning.

Dancers often express individual mannerisms by the way in which they do the side-draw step. Some leaders draw the left foot to the right with a quick movement, and then hold the position for the duration of the beat, while others drag the foot slowly, utilizing a full count for the movement. Still another variation of the sidedraw step is made as follows: Step R to side (quick); close with L, no weight (quick); step to left side (slow).

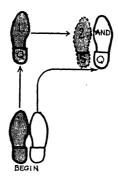


Fig. 2—The Side-draw Right

7.6. — 8	
Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step forward L	Q
and—Step R to side	Q t S
2 —Draw L to R without transferring weigh	
Since this figure always starts with	ı
the L, it is easier to practice by adding	5
two dance-walk steps as follows: Step)
forward L (slow); forward R (slow)	;

step forward L (quick); step R to side (quick); draw L to R, no weight (slow). Practice both forward, backward and sideways.

This combination done sideways is one of the most popular of the tango patterns. It is usually made into either a left or right turn. The left turn is made as follows:

S
S
Q
Q
Š

With practice you can easily make a half-turn instead

of a quarter-turn.

The same combination can be made into a right turn by stepping back L on count 3 as you move around to the closed position while the girl steps forward R close to your R. Compare these two turns with the basic lindy turns, which also start in the open position.

THE LEAD

In general, the lead is the same as that for the sideclose step of the fox-trot, allowing for the difference in rhythm. To avoid having your partner transfer weight to her closing foot in the side-draw figure, maintain a firm sideward pressure with the right hand until the start of the next figure. Leading will be simplified if it is remembered that the man begins with his left foot and the girl with her right after closing to either side.

Because the first quick step of the basic figure is made either forward or backward instead of sideways, it is necessary to be prepared on the preceding step.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Rising on the balls of the feet and then lowering the heels as they are brought together. The tango is done without up or down body movement. Step heel first on a forward step, and lower the heel immediately on a side step.

2. Making side steps too wide. Since the side step is

always quick, a wide step appears awkward.

3. Closing too quickly with a staccato movement. Steps in the modern tango, while made precisely, are always smooth, never jerky.

4. Failing to step directly to the side. Be sure that the side step is on a line with the axis of the shoulders, especially when turning.

THE SIDE-PROGRESSIVE STEP

Since the side-draw leaves the man's left foot free. how can he step with his right after closing to that side? The answer is the side-progressive step. It is a modification of the side-draw and is done, as a rule, to the man's right and the girl's left. Instead of leaving the feet together after the draw step, the left foot is moved forward a few inches and weight transferred to it. Thus the right is free to begin the next figure.

Fig. 3 shows the man's part of this step. Theoretically, it is possible for the leader to do this figure backward to

his left, but it is rather difficult to lead.



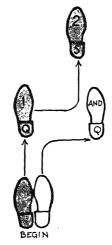


Fig. 3-The Side-progressive Step

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step forward L	Q
and—Swing R close to L and place it a few	7
inches to the side	Q
2 -Draw L close to R and then step for	
ward a few inches in one continuous	S
movement	S
Alternate this figure with the side	-
close left for practice.	

THE LEAD

Begin this figure as a side-draw to the right and then carry your body forward as you step forward left close to your partner's left.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Stepping diagonally forward instead of to the side. In fact, the figure may be made more effective by stepping slightly back on the right.

- 2. Stepping forward on the ball of the left foot instead of using the heel.
- 3. Failing to lead with the body when stepping forward.

THE ROCK STEP (Habanera)

When the Argentine tango with its elaborate array of tricky steps swept the country more than a score of years ago, the *habanera* was one of the favorite figures. The present, modernized form of the step has reduced

it to a simple rocking movement.

This streamlined version of the step can be done forward, backward, sideways and turning. While it has the same pattern as the corresponding figure of the slow fox-trot, the rock step of the tango has its own distinctive style. This is obtained partly by a certain steadiness of the upper body, augmented by supple knee action which absorbs much of the actual rocking movement. Use the feet as if gripping the floor.

Fig. 4 shows the pattern of a forward rock step left. After practicing the step in all directions, beginning with either foot, precede the figure with the dance-walk. First add one walking step to make a three-count com-

Musical Count

Count Rhythm

1 —Step forward L. Leave R in place

and—Transfer weight back to R. Release toe of L from the floor

2 —Transfer weight forward to L Reverse by stepping forward R.



Fig. 4—The Rock Step Forward Left

bination and repeat on the same side. Then alternate by walking two steps between each figure.

THE LEAD

This figure is led in the same manner as the rock step of the slow fox-trot. In order to time the pressure correctly, it is necessary not only to visualize in advance the pattern of the step, but also to antipicate the rhythm. The exact form of the lead depends upon individual interpretation of the figure.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Rocking too much with the upper body, usually caused by lack of suppleness in ankle, knee and hip joints.

2. Trying to rock on the balls of both feet. Use the heel of the forward foot and the ball of the rear foot.

3. Allowing the rear foot to creep forward. After pausing, leave the feet in position.

THE ROCK-CHANGE STEP

For an understanding of the patterns described by this figure, review the step of the same name in Chapter VII, "The Slow Fox-trot." It consists of the first two movements of the rock step followed by a change of direction; the same rhythm as the rock step but different pattern.

As in the slow fox-trot, this figure can be reversed by first taking a step forward, backward, or sideways and following it with a rock movement. The rhythm remains the same—quick-quick-slow.

Some dancers also use the pattern of the twinkle step in the tango. But the twinkle is usually accompanied by a lifting movement, while the rock-change, which is similar, seems to be more in keeping with the "feel" of tango music.

Fig. 5 shows a diagram of the rock-change beginning forward on the left and changing to the opposite direction. Experiment with this figure in all possible directions and turning. Then combine it with the dance-walk or other figures.



Fig. 5-The Rock-change Step Forward Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step forward L. Leave R in place	Q
and—Transfer weight back to R	Q
2 —Step back L	$\tilde{\mathbf{S}}$
Reverse by stepping forward R.	

THE LEAD

See the rock-change of the slow fox-trot.

COMMON MISTAKES

The same principles that apply to the rock-step are equally appropriate to the rock-change.

THE THREE-STEP TURN

The question may arise, "If the three-step can be used in the tango sideways and turning, why not also do it directly forward and backward as in the fox-trot?" Theoretically, there is little reason why certain dance patterns are suitable for one rhythm but not for another, even though the music for both be given the same number of counts per measure. The answer is "style," backed by precept and tradition. Of course, styles change in dance

ing as in clothes, music, or automobiles.

Nevertheless, certain dance patterns are more in keeping with one type of music than with another. When these patterns are interchanged, they do not always harmonize with their new setting. For example, it is possible to adjust the basic fox-trot step to the waltz or tango, but the result is unsatisfactory. Likewise, the three-step when done forward or backward to tango rhythm tends to carry with it the lightness of the fox-trot style. The subtle rise and fall of the three-step, while appropriate to the fox-trot, is not in keeping with the minor-keyed melodies of Argentine music. The side-progressive step can be used in place of it. On the other hand, the three-step can be done sideways and turning with no apparent rise and fall of the body and therefore is consistent with other tango figures.

For details of three-step turns, see Chapter VII, "The

Slow Fox-trot."

THE LEAD

This is the same as for slow fox-trot turns.

COMMON MISTAKES

- 1. Dancing in a fox-trot manner. Tango steps are more deliberate and finish with a definite pause on the slow step.
- 2. Accompanying the step with a rise and fall of the body. The body should maintain an even level.

THE PIVOT TURN

This figure likewise closely resembles the pivot turn of the slow fox-trot. Therefore, to understand this step review the pivot turns in both Chapters VI and VII. Note how the turns are led, and the mistakes to avoid.

Be careful to differentiate between the pivot turn and the rock turn. The former is strictly a rotary movement without the forward or backward body sway which is characteristic of the latter. Also try to acquire the subtle difference in technic that tango rhythm demands.

THE CORTÉ (DIP)

A discussion of the tango would be incomplete without mention of this movement. Like the dip of the slow fox-trot described in Chapter VII, it is not a fundamental figure, but merely an embellishment.

In years gone by, when dancing the tango meant giving an exhibition by a few of the more intrepid couples, the corté was a figure in the repertory of every dancer. A tango "step" in those days, however, instead of being a fundamental unit, was usually a combination of several units. In the case of the corté there were nearly as many variations of the figure as there were exponents of the dance. But all forms of the corté had one feature in common-a backward step by the leader on his left, followed by a bend of the knee. Some would precede this

movement with a side-close step. Others used the rockchange with a heavy dropping of the heel as a preparation for the dip. Again, some added the side-close or side-draw after the backward step.

Since the adoption of the modern, simplified tango within the past ten years, all exaggerated movements have been eliminated. Instead of a deep bending of the knee, most dancers now follow a more conservative style. The corté has become merely a backward step on the man's left and forward on the girl's right, followed by a slight bend of the knee. The movement may be made in conjunction with any of the fundamental figures. It is often used to mark the finish of a phrase of music as if punctuating with a period.

THE LEAD

This movement corresponds to the dip of the fox-trot, and the lead is the same. After you take a backward step, an easy downward pressure with the right arm and hand as the supporting knee bends will clearly indicate your intention. The important point is to plan the movement in advance. As in the dip of the slow fox-trot, the leader turns out his left knee to avoid his partner's right. Also be sure that the free leg straightens as the supporting one bends. The toe of this foot may be allowed to rise slightly after the knee straightens.

In following, the girl must avoid lunging into the corté; this is usually caused by anticipating the movement. If the girl steps forward heel first, she will be able to regulate the amount of knee flexion in accordance

with the lead.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Bending the supporting knee too deeply. The exaggerated knee bend should be left to the exhibition dancers. The trend is toward simplicity of movement.

2. Lunging or falling into the corté. The step is taken in the usual manner, with the leg extended, after which the knee may be flexed.

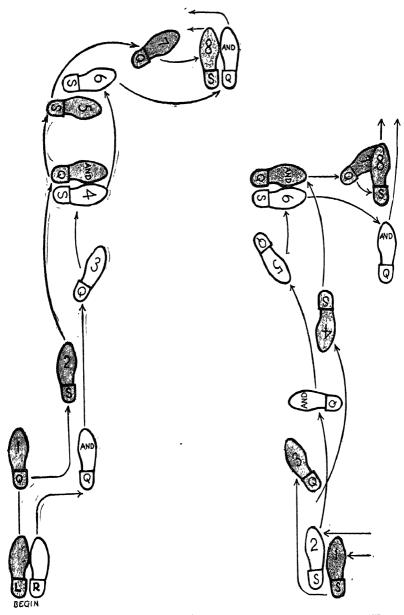
3. Allowing the hips to protrude.

COMBINATION I

Musical Count R	hythm
$ \begin{array}{c} \text{side-} \\ \text{progres-} \\ \text{sive step} \end{array} \left\{ \begin{array}{c} 1\text{Step forward } \mathbf{L} \\ \text{and Step side R} \\ 2\text{Move L close to R and step forward} \end{array} \right. $	Q Q S
basic side- close step turning right 3—Step forward R beginning right turn and Step side L facing wall 4—Close with R 5—Step side L	Q Q S S
6—Cross R over L turning to partially open position 7—Bring partner to closed position and	S
basic side- step forward L turning left	Q
draw step and Step side R facing L O D 8-Draw L to R; no weight on L	Q S
Continue with Combination II.	-

COMBINATION II

Musical Con	ınt	Rhythm
	1-Step side L	S
	2-Cross R over L	S
three-step turning left	3—Uncross and step forward L beginning left turn and Step side R facing center of room and	Q
	continuing left turn 4—Step back L in outside position rig	Q
	completing one-half turn left	S
basic side-	5—Step diagonally back R to closed pos	si-
close step	tion continuing turn	Q
turning	and Step side L facing wall	Q
left	6—Close with R	S
rock-step turning left	7—Step forward L toward wall, turning left and Step back R, turning left to face L O S 8—Step L in place	~ Q
	Continue with Combination III.	-

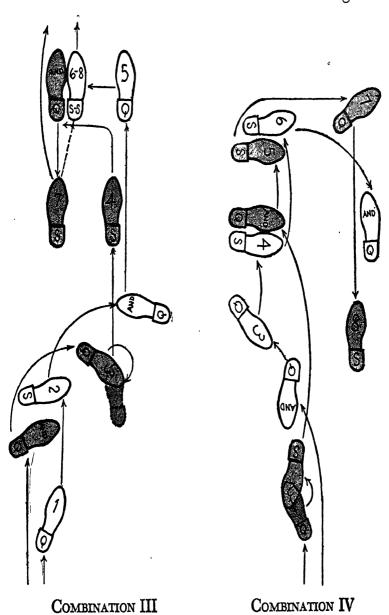


COMBINATION I

COMBINATION II

COMBINATION III

	COMBINATION III	
Musical Cou	int R	hythm
three-step sideways	I—Step forward R beginning right turn and Step side L facing wall and continuing	Q
	turn 2—Cross R over L as you turn partner to a partially open position. Girl crosses L	Q
	over R 3—Step L around partner to closed position	S
three-step	continuing right turn and Step R to side facing center of room and	Q
turning { right	continuing turn 4—Step forward L in outside position left,	Q
}	completing right turn 5—Step forward R returning to closed posi-	S
basic side- close step	tion and Step side L	Q Q S S S
forward	6-Close with R	Š
corté	7—Step back L in modified dip or corté	S
	8-Transfer weight forward to R	S
	Continue with Combination IV.	
	C W	
Musical Con	COMBINATION IV	heithm
Musical Cou	ent R	hythm
ſ		hythm Q
Musical Coupivot turn	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn	_
pivot turn }	ant I—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continu-	Q
pivot turn { left } basic side-	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn 2—Step in place L completing one-half turn left 3—Step back R continuing left turn	Q Q s
pivot turn left basic side- close step	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn 2—Step in place L completing one-half turn left 3—Step back R continuing left turn and Step side L to face wall	Q Q s
pivot turn { left } basic side-	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn 2—Step in place L completing one-half turn left 3—Step back R continuing left turn and Step side L to face wall 4—Close with R	Q Q S Q Q S
pivot turn left basic side- close step turning	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn 2—Step in place L completing one-half turn left 3—Step back R continuing left turn and Step side L to face wall	Q Q S Q Q S S
pivot turn left basic side- close step turning	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn 2—Step in place L completing one-half turn left 3—Step back R continuing left turn and Step side L to face wall 4—Close with R 5—Step side L 6—Cross R over L, turning to a partially open position	Q Q S Q Q S
pivot turn left basic side-close step turning left	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn 2—Step in place L completing one-half turn left 3—Step back R continuing left turn and Step side L to face wall 4—Close with R 5—Step side L 6—Cross R over L, turning to a partially open position 7—Uncross and step forward L toward wall as you bring partner to closed position	Q Q S Q Q S S
pivot turn left basic side-close step turning left	1—Step forward L beginning left turn and Step around and back with R continuing turn 2—Step in place L completing one-half turn left 3—Step back R continuing left turn and Step side L to face wall 4—Close with R 5—Step side L 6—Cross R over L, turning to a partially open position 7—Uncross and step forward L toward wall	Q Q S Q Q S S S



The Rumba and the Mambo

Rhythm, 2/4 or 4/4. Tempo, Danzon, 30 to 36 measures per minute; Bolero-Son, 32 to 40 measures per minute; Rumba, 48 to 56 measures per minute; Mambo, 32 to 64 measures per minute.

LATIN AMERICAN rhythms, especially those from Cuba, have now become a fixture in our ballroom dancing. While the term "rumba" is generally used to include all Cuban dance rhythms, except the mambo and conga, strictly speaking, it should be limited to a type of fast music played in 2/4 time.

Most music and records have a special term which identifies each particular type of Cuban rhythm. Most commonly known is the "son," which is African in background, and was the first dance music of this type to tell a story, that is, have a lyric. Later the "bolero" developed this into a longer romantic song corresponding to our ballad numbers. Many Cuban records are marked, "Bolero-Son."



The cross step of the tango is usually made in a partially open position.

See page 194.



In the corté or dip the man's left knee is turned out to avoid his partner's right knee.

See page 202.

The man crosses his right foot in back of the left in the break step of the rumba. See page 222.





Open-waltz turn left to outside position right.

See page 174.

Another type of song depicting farm and country life is the "guajira"; while the "guaracha" is similar to a fast rumba.

The "danzon," another popular Cuban dance rhythm, developed from the Spanish "danza." According to Emilio Grenet in his book, "Popular Cuban Music," the first danzon was written in 1879. But in 1916, after listening to some colored American jazz musicians, Cuban writers put more vitality into the music, and now like most Cuban dance music it shows a strong African influence.

The difference in the character of Cuban music is due partly to the use of certain native instruments which mark the accent. Of these, the *maracas* are most prominent. They are gourds fitted with handles and contain dried seeds, beads, or small pebbles. When shaken in strict rhythm with a marked accent, they furnish an easy guide for the dancer.

A more subtle rhythm is produced by the *claves*, which are merely two round sticks of hard wood. These are struck together at irregular musical intervals and provide a counter-rhythm to the maracas. This unchanging rhythmical pattern of the claves is typical of all Cuban music.

Another commonly used native instrument is the *guiro*. This is an elongated gourd with numerous serrations on one side. By scraping this with a piece of wire, various rhythms can be elicited.

Of great importance is the bongo or double-headed drum. Like a pair of castenets, the two heads are of different pitch: the "papa" and "mama" drums. When played, it is held between the knees, and intricate rhythms are produced by striking the drumheads with the fingers of both hands. The deeper tones of the larger congo drum furnish a contrasting bass. This drum is likewise played with the hands.

Most of the basic rumba figures are identical in pat-

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tern and rhythm to those of the slow fox-trot. For that reason you can easily "fake" a rumba by doing slow fox-trot figures in miniature: leaving out all dance-walk steps; relaxing knees and hips to avoid movement of the upper body; and holding the typical rumba position a few inches apart.

However, this will give only the outward semblance of the rumba. It's a short-cut to easy dancing. It will lack that all important quality which enables certain couples

to stand out on the floor: namely, style.

Style in dancing is a composite of numerous factors. Then, too, we must differentiate between the personal style of the individual dancer, and a style that we associate with the dance itself. Every dance has its own distinctive character: rhythmical movements that express a mood.

Music is the essence of social dancing. It is the catalytic agent that vitalizes our movements. But the manner of response is conditioned by various factors. The reaction of a people as a whole may be determined by racial temperament, customs, environment, and so on. For that reason, the tango has developed a certain style or character entirely different from that of the rumba or the samba, although the music for each may be counted in 2/4 time.

Likewise, each dance may be colored by the personal style of the individual. However, care must be taken that the dance is not completely submerged by individual mannerisms. That may happen when a fox-trot style is superimposed on a tango or rumba rhythm. By means of an appropriate technic and body control, learn to adapt yourself to the accepted style of each dance.

A ballroom dance does not suddenly materialize overnight. Except for occasional short-lived "fad" dances, they represent years of growth, change, and development. Like its concomitant music, a dance is part of a social consciousness. Gradually the response of a people to certain musical rhythms becomes crystallized into characteristic dance patterns. Music and dance become wedded.

The various forms of the rumba have already passed through these stages of development. Since we have taken over the dances practically in toto, we should endeavor to retain as much of the original native style as possible; although our interpretation of rumba music is bound to be somewhat different from that of the Cubans. In fact, it has been observed that the influence of the American temperament on the rumba and conga has in turn affected the style of the Cubans themselves.

THE RUMBA MOVEMENT

The distinguishing feature of Cuban dances is a certain "rumba movement." This characteristic action of the knee and hip is just as important to the dance as are precise patterns described by the feet. Even the older and more sedate danzon, with its Spanish tradition, has succumbed to the African influence. While the better dancers among the Cubans all employ a similar movement, when asked to analyze what they are doing, they are invariably unable to do so.

However, this intriguing rumba movement can be explained without difficulty. And while to perfect it may require considerable practice, the result will be an interesting style comparable to that of the typical Cuban dancer.

To begin with, there is nothing unnatural about the knee and hip movement. The only difficult and unnatural part is the timing of the steps. Ordinarily, we move one foot, transfer weight to it, and then move the other. In the Cuban dances, however, two movements are made simultaneously. As weight is being transferred to

one foot, the other foot is moved into position. To accomplish this, the moving foot does not immediately receive full weight. While the step is taken exactly on the beat of music, weight is gradually transferred while the other foot is moving into position. This delayed transfer of weight results in the pelvis tilting away from the moving leg instead of toward it as in the usual dancewalk. That is, while the hips eventually do tilt toward the supporting foot, the fact that the free leg is moving at the same time gives the effect of opposition.

It is possible to use this counter-action of hips and feet because steps are taken very short. Unlike the dance-walk, which is always made with the leg extended, steps in the rumba are about half the usual length and therefore are taken with the knee partially bent. To avoid unnecessary flexing of the knee, forward and side steps are taken with the foot flat on the floor,

but with the weight forward.

Since the knee is partially bent at the completion of the step, it must straighten as it receives weight; otherwise, both knees would be bent at the same time. Therefore, as the supporting leg straightens, the other is relaxed and the foot moved into position with the knee partly flexed. Thus the knee action is opposite to that used in normal walking, in which you step with a straight leg and allow the knee to bend as it receives weight.

Not only is the action of the knees a natural result of taking steps of half-length or less, but also the accompanying movement of the pelvis is a natural reaction to the transfer of weight. Movements of the knees and hips are never forced. If you stand with your feet together and your weight evenly divided, the hips will be level. But if you put all your weight on one foot and relax the other leg, the pelvis will automatically tilt or become higher on the side of the supporting leg, provided the

pelvic and waist muscles are in proper condition. This natural tilting of the pelvis need be no more than occurs in normal walking. It is because steps are very short, almost like marking time in certain figures, that movements of the knees and hips are more noticeable. Dancers sometimes make the mistake of considering the hip and knee action as the motivating force instead of the result of stepping in a certain way. This tends to produce exaggerated movements with tense muscles. The rumba when correctly done requires little effort.

Since this characteristic movement is the essence of all Cuban dances, let us analyze a complete step. Stand with your weight evenly divided over both feet. Move the left foot forward a few inches, keeping it flat on the floor. Since the step is quite short, the knee will be partially bent. As the left foot is moved forward, allow the pelvis to tilt toward the right. That is, the hip on that side will be higher. Notice that both movements are simultaneous and that the hips tilt away from the moving leg, not toward it.

Now transfer your weight gradually to the left foot by allowing the pelvis to tilt toward the left. With the change of weight the left knee straightens. At the same time, the right foot is placed forward a few inches. The tilting of the hips to the left and the forward movement of the right foot must also be simultaneous.

It is this timing that requires practice. Movements of the knees and hips are perfectly natural if muscles and joints are relaxed. But their smooth integration requires excellent co-ordination.

Let us note some of the more important points to be kept in mind. Toe directly forward. This will tend to keep the knees together. It is unnecessary to push the knees forward or to cause them to overlap. The primary object is to relax the moving leg. Of course, if knees have a tendency to go awry, more drastic measures may be required to keep them in close communion.

Avoid locking the knees. While the knee must straighten as it receives weight, be sure that it is done smoothly, not with a sudden, jerky movement. As noted in Chapter I, "Body Control," a stiffening of the knee joint automatically pushes the hips backward. Also it tends to throw weight back onto the heels. While the heels are kept in contact with the floor, the weight must be carried forward over the balls of the feet as in all ball-room dancing.

Avoid staccato movements of the hips. While the foot momentarily ceases to move after a step is taken, the hips maintain a steady, continuous flowing rhythm. This is possible because of the gradual transition of weight.

Although it is easier to step forward, you should be able to move in any direction without losing the rumba style. Therefore, let us analyze a side-close step, which is the beginning of the basic figure. Starting with the feet together and the weight evenly distributed, move the left foot a few inches to the side, with the ankle and knee relaxed. At the same time, allow the pelvis to tilt to the right, or away from the moving leg. Then as you transfer weight to the left foot, causing the pelvis to tilt to the left, simultaneously close with the right, allowing the muscles of that leg to relax. Repeat this side-close movement a number of times to the left and then reverse to the right.

The backward step follows the same principle. As you place the ball of the left foot back a few inches, with the knee bent, simultaneously allow the hips to tilt to the right. Before transferring weight to the left, lower the heel by straightening the knee. But be careful not to lock the knee joint. Then as the hip rises on the left side, relax the right leg and place the ball of the foot a few

inches back. The backward step will seem more difficult at first because of the extra movement to lower the heel prior to shifting the weight.

Thus far we have endeavored to explain the typical rumba movement as applied to steps taken forward, backward and sideways. No mention has been made of rhythm. Until this co-ordination becomes automatic, it is better to forget about music and rhythm. Or, if music is used, take only two steps to a measure. Don't expect to acquire the Cuban style overnight. Plan to practice at least a half-hour a day for a week or two.

You are now ready to apply the Cuban movement to the various rumba figures. As mentioned previously, most of these figures are similar in pattern to those of the slow fox-trot. Likewise, each figure consists of three changes of weight to a measure of music and the rhythm is quickquick-slow. Unlike the slow fox-trot, however, there are no walking steps in the rumba. Figures are joined directly without change of rhythm.

The names given to the fundamental figures correspond in general to the steps of similar pattern in the slow fox-trot. The "break" is peculiar to the rumba.

- The Basic Step
 The Three-step
- 3. The Rock Step
- 4. The Rock-change
- 5. The Break
- 6. Circle Turns

THE BASIC STEP

In rhythm and pattern the basic step of the rumba differs little from the basic fox-trot step. The Cuban manner of dancing with short steps, combined with an opposition movement of the knee and hips, imparts a distinctive mode of presentation.

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The basic step can be done forward, backward, sideways and turning. Quarter-turns or less are usually employed, since there is little progressive movement in the rumba. As in the fox-trot and waltz, these turns are based upon a box pattern made by doing the basic step forward and backward as shown in Fig. 1. It is the foundation for a left turn as illustrated in Fig. 2. As a rule, the basic step is not used for turning right.

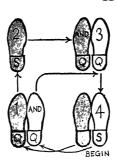


Fig. 1-The Basic Step Forward and Backward

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Step L to side; hips move to right	Q
and—Close with R; hips move to left	Q S
2 -Step forward L; hips move to right	S
3 -Step R to side; hips move to left	Q
and—Close with L; hips move to right	Q
4 -Step back R; hips move to left	S

The transfer of weight and movement of the hips on the slow steps should be gradual and distributed evenly during counts 2 and 4.

While movements of the hips are not described in Fig. 2, try to apply the same technic as in Fig. 1.

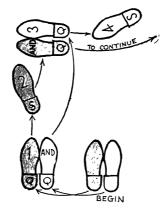


Fig. 2-The Basic Quarter-turns Left

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step L to side	Q
and—Close with R	Q
2 -Step forward L, making quarter-turn	ı
left toward center of room	S
3 -Step R to side, facing center of room	Q
and—Close with L	Q
4 —Step back R, making quarter-turn to)
face opposite L O D	S

By repeating these two measures you can make a complete left turn and finish in original starting position.

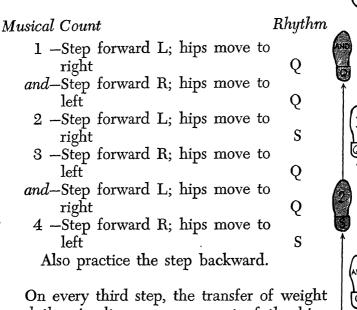
THE THREE-STEP

This popular rumba figure has the same general pattern and rhythm as the three-step of the fox-trot. Unlike the latter step, however, it is done only forward, backward and sideways. While it is the basis of circle turns, only these three forms of the figure are used. The girl's part of the "break" step resembles a three-step turn, but it will be considered under the former heading.

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Fig. 3 illustrates the three-step done forward twice. A description of the sideward three-step will be found under "Circle Turns."

The co-ordination of knees and hips can be acquired more readily with this figure, rather than the basic step, because all movements are in the same direction.



On every third step, the transfer of weight and the simultaneous movement of the hips should be smooth and gradual, occupying a full beat of music.

Fig. 3-The Three-step Forward Left and Right

THE ROCK STEP

While in pattern and rhythm this figure corresponds to the same step of the fox-trot and tango, there is no actual rocking movement of the body. Knee and hip joints absorb any movements that would tend to be transmitted to the upper body.

The rock step is done in a forward and backward direction and can be used for limited progression. Fig. 4

illustrates two rock steps forward.

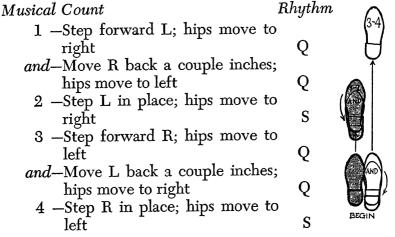


Fig. 4—The Rock Step Forward Left and Right

Practice the figure backward. By moving the foot forward a little on the *and* count, it can be given more emphasis.

THE ROCK-CHANGE

As the term implies, the rock-change begins as a rock step and finishes with a change of direction. Like all rumba steps, the rhythm is quick-quick-slow. It can be done forward, backward, or sideways.

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Fig. 5 diagrams the rock-change starting back on the right followed by a forward step right. Both the "rock" and the "rock-change" steps can be used as "break" figures preparatory to a change of direction.



Fig. 5-The Rock-change Back Right

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Step back R; hips move to left	Q
and—Step in place L; hips move to right	Q
2 -Step forward R; hips move to left	S
Practice beginning forward R and	Ĺ
reverse.	

Fig. 6 illustrates the rock-change done sideways. This is a restful step, especially for fast rumbas, because there is little movement of the feet. Unlike the sideward rock-change of the slow fox-trot and tango, the feet are not crossed on the change part of the step but merely brought to the median line.

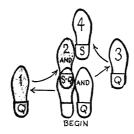


Fig. 6-The Rock-change Sideways

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step L to side; hips move to right	Q
and—Step R in place; hips move to left	Q
2 —Bring L inward and slightly forward	;
hips move to right	S
3 —Step R to side; hips move to left	Q
and—Step L in place; hips move to right	Q.
4 —Bring R inward and a few inches for	-
ward; hips move to left	S
Practice the step moving backward.	

THE BREAK

The break is a figure peculiar to the rumba. It is used to abruptly check a turn in one direction, after which the turn is reversed. As a rule, the leader does the step in place without turning while his partner is making a half-turn right or left. As mentioned under the three-step, this figure then resembles a three-step turn.

Fig. 7 shows a break step to the right for the man's part. It is used to check a right circle turn before revers-

ing the turn to the left.

Fig. 8 illustrates the girl's part for the same break. In other words, as the man does the break in place, he turns his partner into the open position. From this point the

leader can begin a circle turn left by starting back on his left foot as the girl steps forward on her right.

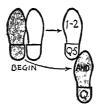


Fig. 7-The Break Right (Man's Part)

Musical Count	Rhythm
 1 -Step R to the side (or in place); hips move to left and-Cross L back of R; hips move to right 2 -Step R in place, hips move to left Reverse figure to the left. When done alternately left and right, this figure can 	S Q Q S
also be used as a dance step.	

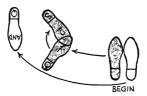


Fig. 8—The Break to the Man's Right (Girl's Part)

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Step L to side, turning right; hips	
move to right	Q
and—Step R to side, completing half-turn	
right to open position; hips move to left	Q
2 Step L in place; hips move to right	Ś

Following a circle turn left, the same break is used turning left. That is, the girl steps forward L, turning left (quick); steps side R, completing half-turn left (quick); steps in place L (slow).

CIRCLE TURNS

Pivot turns are not used in the rumba. Instead, there are various forms of circle turns. By circle turn is meant a rotary movement in which the pattern of the steps describes a circle.

A circle turn may be done as in Fig. 9 with the man travelling forward and his partner backward using the three-step. By retaining the closed position but moving sideways, a variation of the same circle turn left can be made. (See Fig. 11.) In this form of the step the man keeps his left foot forward as he travels sideways to his right, while the girl has her right foot advanced and crosses her left in back as she likewise moves to her right.

In the same manner the right turn can be done using the three-step while describing a small circle. In this case it is customary for the man to move backward while leading his partner forward—either in the closed or semi-open position. (See Fig. 10.) As with the left turn, the leader can readily convert this circle turn right into a sideward movement by doing the three-step sideways and crossing the feet. In this case he keeps his left foot in front and crosses his right in back; meanwhile, his partner, has her right foot forward as they both move to their left. (See Fig. 12.)

In doing these circle turns the man, if he so desires, can take his steps almost in one spot while leading his partner around in a small circle. When done in this manner, the turns are often called "spot" turns.

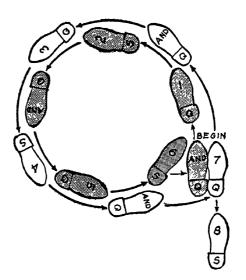


Fig. 9-The Circle Turn Left

Musical Cor	ınt F	Rhythm	
three-step	$ \begin{cases} \textit{Man's Part} \\ \textit{I}-\textit{Step forward L} \\ \textit{and}-\textit{Step forward R} \\ \textit{2}-\textit{Step forward L} \end{cases} $	Q Q S	Girl's Part Step back R Step back L Step back R
	$\begin{cases} \text{3Step forward R} \\ \text{andStep forward L} \\ \text{4Step forward R} \end{cases}$	Q Q S	Step back L Step back R Step back L
	$\begin{cases} 5\text{Step forward L} \\ and\text{Step forward R} \\ 6\text{Step forward L} \end{cases}$	Q Q S	Step back R Step back L Step back R
basic step	$\begin{cases} 7\text{Step side R} \\ and\text{Close with L} \\ 8\text{Step back R} \end{cases}$	Q Q S	Step side L Close with R Step forward L

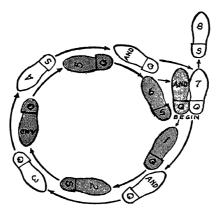
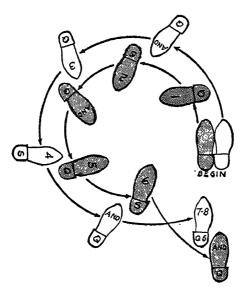


Fig. 10—The Circle Turn Right

Musical Co	int	Rhyth	m
	Man's Part		Girl's Part
three-step	$\left\{ egin{array}{l} 1- ext{Step back L} \ and- ext{Step back R} \ 2- ext{Step back L} \end{array} ight.$	Q Q S	Step forward R Step forward L Step forward R
	$\left\{ egin{array}{l} 3- ext{Step back R} \ and- ext{Step back L} \ 4- ext{Step back R} \end{array} ight.$	Q Q S	Step forward L Step forward R Step forward L
	$\left\{egin{array}{l} 5 ext{-Step back L} \ and ext{-Step back R} \ 6 ext{-Step back L} \end{array} ight.$	Q Q S	Step forward R Step forward L Step forward R
basic step	$\begin{cases} 7-\text{Step side R} \\ and-\text{Close with L} \\ 8-\text{Step forward I} \end{cases}$	Q Q R S	Step side L Close with R Step back L



 $Fig.\ 11-The\ Circle\ Turn\ Left$

Musical Cou	int	Rhyth	m
sideward	Man's Part 1—Step forward L making quarter turn left	Q	Girl's Part Step back R making quarter turn left
three-step	and—Step side R 2—Cross L over R	Q S	Cross L back of R Step side R
sideward three-step	$\begin{cases} \text{3Step side R} \\ \text{and}C\text{ross L over R} \\ \text{4Step side R} \end{cases}$	Q Q S	Cross L back of R Step side R Cross L back of R
sideward three-step	$\begin{cases} 5\text{Cross L over R} \\ and\text{Step side R} \\ 6\text{Cross L over R} \end{cases}$	Q Q S	Step side R Cross L back of R Step side R
break step	$\begin{cases} \text{ 7Step R to side} \\ \text{and}\text{Step L back of} \\ \text{ 8Step in place R} \end{cases}$	R Q S	Step back L Step back R Step in place L

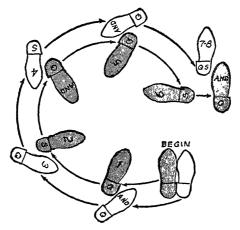


Fig. 12-The Circle Turn Right

Musical Con	Musical Count Rhythm		hm
	Man's Part		Girl's Part
sideward three-step) heel		
1	2—Step side L	S	Cross R over L
. 7	3-Step R back of L heel	Q	Step side L
sideward three-step	heel		
sideward three-step	$\begin{cases} \text{5Step side L} \\ \text{andStep R back of L} \\ \text{heel} \\ \text{6Step side L} \end{cases}$	Q	Cross R over L Step side L
	(6—Step side L	S	Cross R over L
break step	$\begin{cases} \text{7Step R to side} \\ \text{andStep L back of R} \\ \text{8Step in place R} \end{cases}$	Q Q S	Step back L Step back R Step in place L

Fig. 9 illustrates a circle turn left using the three-step with the man moving moving forward and his partner back. Here it is shown being completed with a basic step back right which could lead directly into a circle turn right as illustrated in Fig. 10. By completing the left turn with a basic step forward right, the couple could repeat the combination. In the same manner, the circle turn right either can be repeated or can continue into the left turn depending upon whether the couple does the basic step backward or forward at the completion of the turn. These combinations are primarily for practice purposes.

Fig. 11 illustrates how the circle turn left, as shown in Fig. 9, can be developed into a sideward movement while a couple retains the closed position. The man keeps his left foot forward while the girl has her right foot in front

and crosses her left in back.

Fig. 12 illustrates the circle turn right changed to a lateral movement. The man again keeps his left foot forward as he moves sideways in a small circle, while his partner has her right foot in advance. Both turns finish with the break step shown in Fig. 7.

These diagrams only approximate the position of the feet. In the same number of measures a couple may spin around several times-depending somewhat upon the tempo of the music. Also most of the fundamental figures, such as the rock step and the rock-change, can be used as break steps when it is desired to check the turn.

THE MAMBO

During 1947, devotees of Latin American music observed that orchestras were playing certain pieces with a peculiar accent to the rhythm. A few dancers, instead of using the familiar rumba steps, were interpreting the music with a different body movement and step pattern. It was called the "mambo"; and today it is in the repertory of all bands that play this type of music.

While a dance like the mambo may seem to spring spontaneously into existence, actually we must go back many years to trace its origin. In fact, we could well begin in the Congo region of Africa with a native astride a long drum constructed from a hollowed-out log. While he beat a rhythm with his hands on the skin stretched over the end of the drum, three others beat intricate counterrhythms with sticks on the sides of the log. They were playing an accompaniment for a mambo, which translated from the African dialect means "open your ears and listen." The African mambo is a musical conversation in which one person expresses his opinion to another in song, and is replied to in the same manner.

Now let us travel to Havana, Cuba, where in 1934 Arsenio Rodriguez, noted Cuban musician and composer, mulled over these Congo rhythms. He had become bored with the familiar rumba rhythms and wanted to experiment. Rodriguez decided to elaborate upon the "montuno," which is customarily played at the end of a song by a single trumpet. He added two more trumpets, a piano and a congo drum. Thus the modern mambo rhythm was

born.

But Rodriguez's ideas were not immediately accepted. The peculiar rhythms with the accented off-beats sounded strange at first, and other musicians called him "loco." Only gradually did they learn to play and appreciate the

odd-sounding music.

To achieve better interpretation, dancers began to alter their rumba style to fit this new syncopated form of music. In New York during the middle forties the off-beat rumba became popular. At the same time in Havana—at the end of the war—a more vigorous style of dancing was developed based upon the same rhythm. This dance with its quick lunging movements or "charges"—forward, sideways, or cross-over—was called "commando." In 1947 the two dance styles were merged and given the name "mambo."

The basic step of the mambo has become established, and a distinctive style of dancing it has emerged. While mambo music is similar to the rumba, the syncopation does not lend itself to the rumba step. The basic rumba

step begins on the accented first beat of the measure, the mambo step usually begins on the second beat. It is this accenting of a normally unaccented beat of music that gives the mambo its distinctive quality. It requires a good sense of rhythm and considerable practice to acquire the "feel" of the syncopated mambo music, but the steps themselves are not difficult to execute.

Regarding dance style there is less sideward movement of the hips than in the rumba, and more movement of the arms and upper body, especially when a couple separates for a few steps. In featuring such separations, the mambo is akin to the lindy hop and other jitterbug dances in which a couple often breaks apart to execute a few steps individually, or the girl follows by watching her partner's movements. Also like the lindy hop the mambo can be changed to double or triple time by the addition of extra steps or movements in the same allotted time.

Fig. 13 shows the basic step done forward on the left, and back right. This can be varied by doing both steps forward or both backward. To change this into a double mambo step, the dancer simply taps in place on count 1 (which is usually held) before stepping forward or back. The triple mambo is done by taking two quick steps in place

(count and—1) before stepping on count 2.

Fig. 14 illustrates the basic step done sideways. This can likewise be done in double or triple time.

Fig. 15 shows the basic step made into quarter turns left. This rather complicated looking pattern is really not difficult if you think of it as Fig. 13 done while turning.

Since they are used to starting on the first beat of a measure, many dancers find it easier to get into the mambo rhythm by means of a four count variation shown in Fig. 16 A. After taking these four preliminary steps, they pause for one count before beginning the basic step on count 2. Fig. 16 B illustrates the same preparatory step with a different pattern. Some may find this square pattern a little easier to lead or follow.

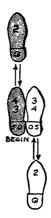


Fig. 13—The Basic Mambo Step Forward and Backward

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Hold 2—Step forward L 3—Step in place R 4—Step L back to original position	Q Q S
1—Hold 2—Step back R 3—Step in place L 4—Step R forward to original position	Q Q S

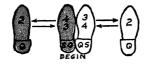
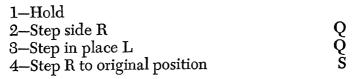


Fig. 14—The Basic Step Sideways

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Hold	
2—Step side L	Q
3—Step in place R	Q
4—Step L to original position	Š

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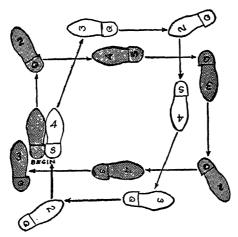


Fig. 15—The Basic Step—Quarter Turns

Musical Count	Rhythm
 1—Hold 2—Step forward L turning left 3—Step side and back R turning left 4—Short step back L completing quarter turleft 	Q Q n S
 1—Hold 2—Step back R turning left 3—Step side and forward L turning left 4—Short step forward R completing half turleft 	Q Q n S
Repeat these eight counts to complet the turn and finish in your original startin	

position.

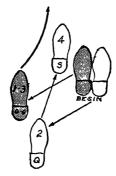
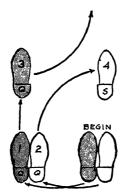


Fig. 16A—A Preparatory Step

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Step diagonally back L	Q
2—Short step back R	Q
3—Step in place L	Q
4—Step forward R	Š



 $Fig.\ 16B-A\ Preparatory\ Step$

Musical Count	Rhythm
1—Step side L	Q
2—Close with R	Q
3—Step forward L	Q
4—Step side R	Š

The Conga

Rhythm, 2/4 or 4/4. Tempo, 58 to 64 measures per minute.

THE conga is a bit of Africa transplanted to the ball-room. The pulse-stirring rhythms of the conga drum, from which the dance derives its name, have furnished an exciting interlude to the more melodious but slower-tempoed rumba music.

The history of the conga would lead us back many generations; probably to the West Coast of Africa. The story is told that the conga rhythm originated with African slaves brought to the West Indies. With their legs bound by heavy chains they would walk three steps and then rest.

In Cuba the conga has always been associated with the annual street carnival or *comparsas*. Celebrants flock to Havana from all parts of the country in their colorful costumes to join in the semi-ritualistic parades and street dancing, which may continue for several days.

It remained for this country to adapt the conga to the dance floor. The author first saw it attempted as a ballroom dance in a small dance-hall in Paris in the summer of 1937, where it was first introduced by Eliseo Grenet, famous Cuban composer and orchestra leader. However, the conga did not receive wide recognition until the following season when Mr. Grenet came to this country. Here, in collaboration with Rodolfo D'Avalos, well known Latin American dance instructor, he worked out a more finished form of the dance. Then a dance group under his guidance brought the conga before the public. Because of the simple basic pattern, the use of intriguing rhythm instruments, and the sociable nature of the dance, the conga very soon caught the public fancy as a novelty dance.

Since the conga was originally danced outdoors without partners, certain modifications are necessary for the environment of the ballroom. Without losing the characteristic style common to all Afro-Cuban dances, movements can be modified and steps confined to a smaller area. Also the dance can be given added interest by introducing variations in rhythm and pattern.

Conga music is played somewhat like a fast rumba. Two counts are given to a measure and two measures are always counted together as a unit. The conga can readily be recognized by the heavy drum beat on every fourth count.

For the purpose of variety two forms of the conga will be described, the single and the double-similar to the single and double Lindy hop. In the single conga two steps or movements are made to each measure, whereas the double conga employs extra steps in the same length of time, to which the count of and is given.

THE SINGLE CONGA

Fundamentally, the conga may be said to consist of three steps usually taken sideways followed by an accenting movement of the hip which emphasizes the heavy drum beat on the fourth count. As in the rumba, the important point is how you do it. Merely walking three steps and then giving a kick accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders may be a simple approach to the dance but is somewhat lacking in finesse.

If you have mastered the rumba movement described in the preceding chapter, you should have little difficulty in applying it to the conga. That is, with each movement of the foot, the pelvis tilts in the opposite direction. There is less knee action in the conga because it is danced more on the balls of the feet with the knees kept in easy flexion. This enables you to cross the feet more easily.

Fig. 1 shows the basic single conga traveling sideways



Fig. 1—The Basic Step

Musical Count	Rhythm
1-Move L a few inches diagonally back-	J
ward. At the same time the hips tilt to	
right	S
2-Lift R and cross it over L. Hips tilt to)
left	S
3-Place L a few inches to side with no	
weight. Pelvis again tilts to right	S
4-Exactly on the heavily accented fourth	
beat transfer your weight to L by tilting	·
the hips to left with a quick movement.	
Simultaneously relax the R leg and al-	
low it to extend to the side without lift-	
ing the foot from the floor	S

to the left. The step can also be done forward, backward, or turning. Fig. 2 illustrates the left turn. This is the same as Fig. 1 except that a complete turn is made on the first two counts. The basic step without turning can be done either in the conventional closed position or without touching your partner. It can be varied by traveling in opposite directions. Beginning with the same foot as your partner, you pass each other in a criss-cross manner. On passing catch opposite hands. That is, when you travel to your left, take your partner's right hand with your right, and vice versa. To return to the closed position, the leader remains in place for two measures and allows his partner to return to him.

Begin the reverse figure by moving the R back a few inches. This backward movement of the foot on count 1

enables you to cross more easily on count 2.

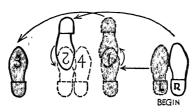


Fig. 2-The Basic Step Turning

Musical Count	Rhythm
1-Step L to side and by a rotation of the	•
shoulders make a half-turn left on the	
ball of the foot. This will bring you	L
back-to-back with your partner	S
2-Step R to side and complete pivot turn	1
left. You are now facing your partner	S
3-Place L to side without weight by keep-	-
ing hips to right	S
4-Shift weight quickly to left on the ac-	-
cented beat and at the same time relax R	S

Reverse turn to right. Of course, the arms must be

dropped as each turns separately.

As in the basic step, variations can be made by traveling in the opposite direction from your partner. Since both begin the turn on the same foot, places are exchanged in a criss-cross manner. At the finish of each turn a couple usually catch opposite hands. After turning left, right hands are caught; while left hands are grasped following a right turn.

Musical Count

Rhythm

1—Step L forward in open position;	
hips move to right	S
2—Step R forward: hips sway to left	S

- 2—Step R forward; hips sway to left S—Step L forward; hips sway to right S
- 4—Step R in place; hips sway to left S Repeat, beginning with L.

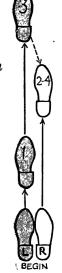


Fig. 3-The Single Rock Step

This is a travel step usually done in the open position. Unlike the basic step, which alternates left and right, the rock step in single time always begins on the same foot. The man starts left and the girl right. As usual the description is for the leader's part.

THE DOUBLE CONGA

As the term implies, the double conga adds extra steps in the same amount of time. This requires the use of and

counts. While these extra counts may be taken at any time, the and is usually included between the third and fourth beats. To do this step well you should first master the rumba, with the opposition hip movement. Because in effect the basic double conga consists of two walking steps followed by a rumba rock step. It may be done forward, backward, sideways, or turning. The rhythm is slow-slow-quick-quick-slow.

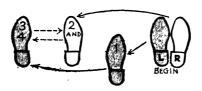


Fig. 4-The Double Conga (Rock Step)

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Short step L diagonally back; hips	a
move to right	S
2 -Cross R over L; hips move to left	S
3 —Short step L to side; hips move to right	Q
and—Step R in place; hips move to left	Q
4 —Step L in place with heavy accent; hips	0
move to right	5
Reverse to the right.	

As in the single conga, a couple may dance in the closed position, or after the first two measures the arms may be released and each can do the step separately.

The same step can be used traveling forward or backward in the closed position. Unlike the rock step of the single conga, this figure alternates. It can also be done turning-either as a pivoting movement in the closed position with forward feet in contact, or in the outside position similar to the circle turn of the rumba.



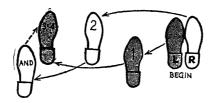


Fig. 5-The Double Conga (Break Step)

In this pattern the rumba break step is substituted for the rock step.

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 -Step L diagonally back; hips to right	S
2 —Cross R over L; hips to left	S
3 —Step L to side; hips to right	Q
and—Cross R back of L; hips to left	Q
4 —Step L in place with heavy accent; hips	3
rigĥt	S
Reverse to right.	

This step can also be done turning. As in the single conga, a complete turn is made on counts 1 and 2.

THE LEAD

Since much of the conga is danced separately from your partner, leading is not of prime importance. If you are doing the single conga, the pattern remains more or less the same and the only lead necessary is to indicate turns and changes of direction. To lead into a turn from the basic side step, first turn your partner to the right with your right hand at her waist and then make a left turn yourself. That is, you turn separately and in opposite directions. From this point turns can be alternated until you wish to vary the figure.

To criss-cross in opposite directions, both must begin



The break step following a circle turn right.

See page 227.



The break step following a circle turn left.
See page 226.

Break step of the Double Conga.

See page 240.





Left hands are grasped following turns to the right in the conga.

See page 238.

with the same foot. Therefore the leader usually pauses or marks time for four counts while his partner continues with the basic step or turn. He can then pick up the step in unison with her. Since a couple often dance separately, it is not essential that both do the same exact pattern. One may do the basic side step while the other turns. Or one may do the single while the other does the double conga, as in the single and double Lindy. Also as in the Lindy, the man may turn his partner right or left by passing clasped hands over her head while he does the single or double conga in place or traveling.

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Covering too much ground. As a street dance the conga permits unlimited individual expression. In the ballroom, steps should be modified in accordance with the different atmosphere, limited space, and in consideration of other couples.

2. Failure to employ the characteristic Cuban movement. The style of a dance or its manner of execution is

as important as the pattern of the steps.

3. Keeping the knees too straight. Unlike the rumba, in which the knee straightens with each change of weight, the conga keeps the knees in easy flexion.

4. Accenting the wrong beat. The accented movement must coincide with the heavy drum beat on each

fourth count.

5. Kicking forcibly on the fourth count of the single conga. If done correctly, the emphasis is with the hips while the free leg extends to the side almost passively.

6. Twisting the hips on the fourth count, causing the knee and foot to turn out. Rumba and conga movements stress the inward rotation of the legs. When extending the leg sideways on count 4, push with the side of the heel to avoid turning the foot.

The Samba

Rhythm, 2/4. Tempo, 52 to 58 measures per minute.

NOTHER importation from Latin America is the Brazilian "samba"—a derivative from the "maxixe" (pronounced ma-she-she). According to William Tuckman in an article, "Jive Below the Border,"—"It all started a good many years ago during Carnival time in Rio. Revelers in the street were dancing the 'Lundú,' a Negro dance imported from the hinterlands, when a few noticed an enterprising little man working on some peculiar variations of his own. This gentleman, whom legend titles only as 'Mr. Maxixe,' soon was imitated by the other dancers. As this new dance became popular, it was named after its originator. The samba itself is a derivation of Mr. Maxixe's Carnival exuberance."

Because of the emphasis on rhythm, common to all music that has its origin among primitive peoples, authentic samba orchestras supplement the usual instruments that carry the melody with simple, home-made rhythm instruments which can be shaken, struck, or scraped. This gives a certain quality peculiar to Brazilian music.

Among these is the *cabaça*, a large gourd fitted with a handle and encased with interwoven strings of beads. By rotating the gourd with one hand while the chains

of beads are held stationary with the other, a steady, predominating rhythm is elicited, corresponding to that

produced by the Cuban maracas.

Another simple but useful instrument, which corresponds to the guiro used for the rumba, is the réco-réco. This may be either an elongated gourd or a short stick of bamboo on which a series of serrations are cut. Various rhythms are produced by scraping it with a short piece of wire.

The chocalho is a hollow cylinder containing beads or small pebbles. Held in the hands at both ends, it is

shaken in strict time with the music.

The tamborim or tambourine is another rhythm instrument used by some orchestras. Instead of the usual round shape, it is often square, and is beaten with a small stick instead of the fingers.

Samba music is played in 2/4 time. But against this dominant basic rhythm the drum beats in syncopated

time, giving an unusual character to the music.

The cariocas of Rio are imbued with the joy of dancing. Consequently, as with "jitterbugs," less attention is paid to exact form or pattern and more to personal responsiveness to the music. For that reason it is difficult to

specify any precise technic for the samba.

In general, it might be described as a Viennese waltz pattern in 2/4 time. The basic figure consists of a forward or backward step followed by a side-close. The rhythm is quick-quick-slow. Like the waltz, the samba step has an undulating or lifting movement. But while the waltz has a single rise and fall to a measure, the samba has a double one, which causes it to appear "bouncy." The amount of rise and fall varies greatly with individual dancers. Some do it almost imperceptibly, keeping the feet nearly flat on the floor, the slight up and downward movement being controlled mostly by the knees. Others do the step with a decided bounce or

hop, accenting counts 1 and 2. The lifting movements occur on the *and* counts in-between. The latter style is far more strenuous, as the springing action is largely in the ankle and foot.

Besides this buoyant rise and fall, the samba is usually accompanied by a body sway peculiar to this dance. Unlike the rumba, which keeps the upper body nearly motionless while the hips accent the rhythm, the samba keeps the hips more centered while the upper body sways forward, backward, or sideways in opposition to the step. When you do the samba step forward, the upper body is inclined slightly backward from the hips; while there is a forward sway of the body as the step is done backward. These movements can be combined with a lateral inclination for turns. This body movement is probably a carry-over from the maxixe.

Fig. 1 shows the pattern of the basic step. As in the waltz, the length of the side step may vary. As a rule it is quite short and may be omitted entirely. In such a case

it becomes a "balance" figure.

The basic step can be done forward, backward, or turning. Turns are made in the same manner as waltz turns, and are based upon forward and backward movements of the basic step.

Another popular variation is almost identical in pattern and rhythm to the ball-change step of the peabody. (See Fig. 5, p. 154.) However, the samba version of the ball-change is done with the lilting movement typical of all samba steps.

Likewise, as in the peabody, the ball-change step can be made into a paddle turn. For a description of this

movement see page 155.

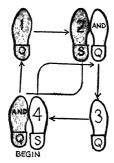


Fig. 1—The Basic Step Forward and Backward

Musical Count	Rhythm
1 —Step L forward on ball of foot with a preparatory lifting movement followed	
by a slight bend of the knee	Q
and-Place R a few inches to the side with	
another lifting movement	Q
2 -Close with L and slightly bend both	
knees	S
3 —Step R back with preliminary lifting movement followed by slight bend o	
knee	Q
and—Place L a few inches to the side with	ı İ
lifting movement	Q
4 —Close with R and slightly bend both	
knees	S
Reverse the figure by stepping bac	k L and
forward.	

These "box" patterns are the foundation for turns. By stepping forward L you can turn left, and, conversely, by stepping back L you can turn right. Also practice it as a balance step by bringing the feet together on the and count, but retaining the rhythm and style of the basic figure.

THE MARCHA

Besides the samba, Brazilians have another popular dance—the marcha, which is a Brazilian counterpart of the Cuban conga. Like the conga, it is danced in the streets at carnival time. Unlike it, however, the marcha has always been danced in the ballroom.

In rhythm it resembles a one-step. While the basic movement is a simple shuffling or prancing step, the basic samba figure can also be done to this music. Another popular variation is shown in Fig. 2.

Musical Count

- 1 -Short step forward L with slight bend of knee
- and—Close with R
 - 2 —Short step forward L with more pronounced bend of knee accompanied by an easy pushing action with R. As you move forward on L, allow the R to slide back a few inches

Reverse, starting with R. This step is usually done in the open position with both traveling forward.

Fig. 2—A Marcha Step

Rhythm





S

The Lindy Hop

Rhythm, 4/4. Tempo, 32 to 44 measures per minute.

HE lindy hop is strictly an American phenomenon. It is a concomitant of swing music, which is likewise a product of this country. As swing and boogie-woogie graduated from ragtime and jazz, so the lindy hop picked up where the Charleston left off. As the latter dance began to fade out in the late twenties, the lindy made its appearance. In fact, a remnant of the old Charleston movement is still seen in the "jockeying step" and in the accenting of the upbeat of music by either hopping or bending the knee.

While swing music and jitterbug dancing developed

in the United States, a study of their background would at the same time provide us with a history of the colored race in this hemisphere. According to Katherine Dunham, young American concert dancer, who has made a study of West Indian and Afro-American dances, movements characteristic of the lindy and Charleston were brought to the island of Jamaica by African slaves in the sixteenth century.

Less than fifteen years ago their descendants introduced the modernized rhythms to New York's Harlem district. As the inaugural of the dance happened to coincide with Charles Lindbergh's sensational flight to Paris in 1927, Harlem christened the dance the "Lindy Hop" in his honor.

Since the lindy is but an outgrowth of deeply ingrained rhythms and movements, it is a form of dancing that is subject to wide variations and interpretations. As a result, each locality has its own version of the lindy. Moreover, the same dance may be called by other names in different sections of the country. For example, on the West Coast it its known as the Balboa. In addition, many couples devise semi-routined dances of their own. The elaborate, acrobatic type of a lindy hop number seen on the stage, while giving the impression of being impromptu, is likewise routined and rehearsed.

Despite many of these wild-appearing, contorted dance figures, the lindy does have basic foundation steps which are not difficult and can be learned by practically anyone. The two commonly recognized forms are the single lindy and the double lindy. If the single is mastered first, you should have little difficulty with the double, as the general pattern is the same for both.

Swing or boogie-woogie music, which inspires one to break forth into the lindy rhythm, is characterized by a background of steady 4/4 drum beats. Instead of stressing only the first and third beats of a measure, as in the usual fox-trot, and known as "common time," the four beats of swing rhythm are given nearly the same value. Upon this framework the musician interpolates his own variations of melody. The dancer responds to this style of music by accenting the upbeat with a downward movement—usually by bending the knee.

THE JOCKEYING STEP

While this is not the basic lindy step, it is important as a foundation figure, and should be practiced before taking up the single lindy. In fact, the first four counts of this figure form the basis of the single lindy. The jockeying step also develops control of the knees, which is an essential feature of this dance.

First, practice the following exercise: Step on the L with the knee perfectly straight; hold the other foot off the floor (count 1). Bend the L knee with a quick movement (count 2). Straighten the L knee (count 3). Again bend the knee (count 4). Step on the R while you hold the L off the floor, and repeat the bending and straightening movements. Alternate a number of times until you can do the step smoothly and in perfect rhythm. Then practice with slow fox-trot music played in swing or boogie-woogie style. You can recognize it by the steady, even rhythm of the bass. Give four counts to each measure. Your knee straightens on counts 1 and 3, and bends on counts 2 and 4.

This knee action was part of the original Charleston movement. Later, two small, quick steps were added, which became a distinguishing feature of the lindy. These are taken on the first two counts as follows:

Musical Count

- 1-Lift L knee and step back on ball of foot.
- 2-Lift R knee and step on ball of foot in place.
- 3—Step L forward with knee straight. Hold R off the floor.
- 4—Bend L knee sharply.
- 5-Straighten L knee.
- 6-Again bend L knee.
- 7—Transfer weight to R with knee straight. Hold L off the floor.
- 6-Bend R knee.

Repeat a number of times and then reverse the figure by stepping back R. Next practice with a partner. Do the step in the open position—that is, both facing forward. The leader begins by stepping back L while his

partner steps back R.

Many dancers, instead of starting with a backward step, begin this figure on count 3 by stepping forward with a straight knee, and then finish with the two quick steps on counts 7 and 8. While this may be more authentic, it is less practical from the standpoint of learning the lindy in a short time, as it is easier to lead into the dance by first turning your partner into the open position. If the jockeying step is practiced in this manner, it is an easy transition into the basic lindy step, because fundamentally the latter is simply the first four counts of the jockeying step done alternately left and right.

THE SINGLE LINDY

This is the basic step of the lindy. It requires two measures or eight counts of music. Unlike the jockeying step which is done entirely in the open position, the basic step is invariably done turning. While it is easier to lead into the lindy by swinging your partner into the open position, you must change to the closed position in order to turn. This can be done in two ways—either the leader can bring his partner in front of himself as he steps forward left for a left turn, or he can step around in front of his partner for a right turn.

Fig. 1 illustrates a half-turn left. To make a complete turn, the step must be repeated, which requires four

measures of music.

Fig. 2 shows the same basic step turning right. Practically all combinations in the lindy are built around these two turns.

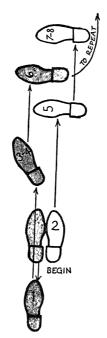


Fig. 1-The Single Lindy Turning Left

Musical Count

- 1—Turn your partner to the open position as you step back L. Girl steps back R. You are facing L O D.
- 2-Lift R knee and step on ball of foot in place.
- 3-Step L forward with straight knee, making quarter-turn left. At the same time bring your partner in front of you to the closed position.
- 4—Bend L knee.
- 5—Step R to side. You are now facing the center of the room.
- 6—Lift L and cross over R. Girl crosses R over L.
- 7—Step R to side with knee straight.
- 8-Bend R knee.

You finish in the closed position, having made a quarter-turn left (the girl makes a three-quarters turn left).

To repeat the step, turn your partner to the open position and simultaneously make another quarter-turn left as you step back L. You are now facing opposite to the line of dance. By repeating the step you return to your original position.

Instead of half turns, quarter turns right or left can be

made. These are easier to lead than the half turns.

A variation of the single lindy can be made by touching the ball of the foot to the floor without weight on counts 3 and 7, immediately followed by an accenting change of weight on counts 4 and 8. Thus the off-beat effect is produced in a different manner. However, it is advisable to give the accent by bending the knee on counts 4 and 8 before attempting this variation.

Fig. 3 illustrates one of the most interesting of the lindy variations. It is known as the "break" and also as the "throw-out." In this figure the leader does the basic step in place while his partner travels away from him with a half-turn left, finishing at arm's-length. He re-

tains hold of the girl's right hand with his left.

From this point there are numerous possibilities. The man may turn the girl to either the right or left by passing clasped hands over her head. While turning, both continue doing the basic step. The leader may or may not turn, at his own discretion. Often, while separated, each does steps of his or her own improvisation.

In the description for both the right and left turns you will notice that both the man and the girl cross in front on count 6. When first learning the step it is advisable to practice it in this manner, as it enables the leader more readily to visualize the dance pattern. However, after becoming thoroughly acquainted with both turns, the man may cross either front or back, at his own discretion. For right turns especially it is easier to cross in back. The girl always crosses in front.

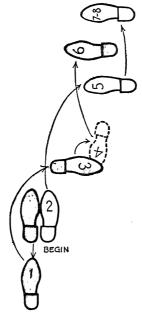


Fig. 2—The Single Lindy Turning Right

Musical Count

1-Turn your partner to the open position facing in L O D as you step back L.

2-Lift R knee and step on ball of foot in place.

- 3-Step L around partner to face her in closed position. The leader thus makes a half-turn right while his partner steps directly forward R.
- 4-Bend L knee.
- 5-Make another quarter-turn right as you place R to side. You have now made a three-quarters turn right and are facing center of room.
- 6-Lift L and cross over R.
- 7-Step R to side with knee straight.
- 8-Bend R knee.

You finish in the same position as for a quarter-turn left. To complete the turn, again swing your partner to the open position as you step back L.



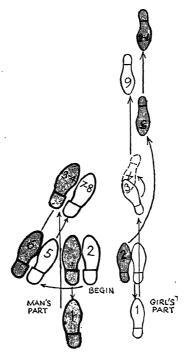


Fig. 3-The Break

Musical Count

Man's Part

1—Lift L knee and step back L.

2—Lift R knee and step R in place.

3—Step forward L with knee straight.

4—Bend L knee.

5—Short step back R.

6-Step L even with R.

7—Step R forward.

8-Bend R knee.

Girl's Part

Step back R.

Step L in place.

Step forward R, beginning left turn.

Bend R knee.

Step back L, completing half-turn Left.

Step back R away from partner.

Step back L away from partner.

Bend L knee.

From this position they can exchange places by turning either right or left. Hands usually remain clasped to indicate leads and are passed overhead. To return to the closed position a right turn can be made as follows:

Man's Part

1—Step back L away from partner.

2—Step R in place.

3—Long step forward L toward partner and place right hand at her waist.

4-Bend L knee.

5-Cross R in back of L, turning right.

6-Step L in place, turning right.

7-Step R in place, completing half turn right.

Girl's Part

Step back R.

Step L in place.

Long step forward R toward partner, beginning right turn.

Bend R knee.

Step L to side, turning right.

Cross R over L, turning right.

Step L to side, traveling around partner and completing full turn to right.

THE DOUBLE LINDY

Just as extra steps are added to the single conga to convert it into the double conga, in the same way you can easily transform the single lindy into the double. The general pattern of the basic step remains the same. To account for the extra steps the count of and is used. Whereas the four counts to the measure of the single lindy denote quarter-notes ("Bounce Me Brother with a Solid Four") the and count indicates an eighth-note ("Beat Me Daddy Eight to the Bar"). The additional steps are made very short and without lifting the feet from the floor.

Fig. 4 shows the left turn while Fig. 5 illustrates a turn to the right.

Musical Count

- Step back L in open position facing L O D.
- 2 -Step R in place.
- 3 —Short step forward L. At the same time turn partner in front of you to the closed position.
- and—Close with R.
 - 4 —Short step forward L, beginning left turn.
 - 5 -Step side R, completing quarterturn left to face center of room.
 - 6 -Cross L over R.
 - 7 -Short step to side R.
- and-Close with L.
 - 8 -Short step to side R.

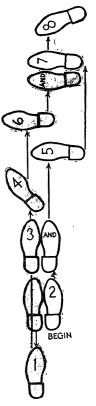


Fig. 4-The Double Lindy Turning Left

While the man is making only a quarter-turn left, the girl makes a three-quarters turn. To repeat the step and complete the turn, swing your partner to the open position facing opposite to L O D and step back L.

In Fig. 5, however, the leader makes a three-quarters turn right while his partner is making only a quarter-turn. Complete the turn by repeating the figure.

All the variations practiced in single time can likewise be done with the double lindy. Also the two rhythms can be interchanged at will. In fact, one dancer may be doing the single while his partner at the same

Musical Count

- 1 —Step back L in open position facing L O D.
- 2 -Step R in place.
- 3 —Step L forward around partner to closed position, turning right.

and—Close with R.

- 4 —Short step L to side, completing half-turn right.
- 5 —Step side R, making another quarter-turn right to face center of room.
- 6 -Cross L front or back.
- 7 -Short step R to side.
- and—Close with L.
 - 8 -Short step to side R.



Fig. 5-The Double Lindy Turning Right

time does the double. That is possible because both steps begin the same way and each figure is done to two measures of music.

Thus far we have considered only figures of 8 counts or two measures each. Now, however, we come to an important and much used variation—the double lindy "break" or "throw-out." Unlike the break of the single lindy, which uses the same pattern as the basic figure, the double lindy break is done in 6 counts or one and a half measures, thus changing the 8 count rhythm of the basic step.

This break figure can be considered as merely the basic step with two counts omitted. Not only is the action thus speeded up, but also an interesting change of rhythm is provided. The counts deleted are counts 5 and 6 of the basic step.

As in the break of the single lindy (see Fig. 3) the man keeps the rhythm of the step in place while swinging his partner away from himself. As the girl travels backwards away from her partner, he keeps a firm grasp of her right hand with his left. Fig. 6 illustrates the girl's part. Since the man takes all his steps of the break within a very small area, it is inadvisable to diagram his part.

From this throw-out or break position a couple can go into numerous variations as described under The Single Lindy. The 6 count rhythm of the break figure can be repeated or they can return to the 8 count basic step.

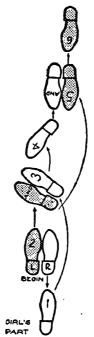


Fig. 6-The Double Lindy Break

Musical Count

Man's Part

1—Lift L knee and step back L in open position.

2—Lift R knee and step R in place.

3—Short step forward L. At same time swing partner away from you with firm pressure of right hand at her waist.

and-Close with R.

4—Step L approximately in place.

5-Short step to side R.

and-Close with L.

6—Step R approximately in place.

Girl's Part

Lift R knee and step back R.

Lift L knee and step L in place.

Step forward R beginning left turn.

Close with L.

Short step back R completing one-half turn left.

Short step back L away from partner.

Close with R.

Short step back L.

Instead of doing the above figure, the leader may do any step that suits his fancy, so long as it consists of 6 counts, and he is ready to step back on his L at the same time his partner steps back on her R following the break.

THE LEAD

Before much can be done with leading or following, each must know his own part. The leader, while retaining the rhythm of the basic step, must indicate either a right or left turn, since practically all lindy steps, except the Jockeying figure, are done turning.

The advantage of starting each lindy figure with a backward step in the open position is to enable you more easily to control your partner's movements. For the left turn, bring your partner in front of yourself to the closed position. And for the right turn, step around in front

of your partner.

The lead for the break is given by a firm push with the right hand at the girl's waist as she steps forward right to turn away from you. While separated, you can guide your partner with your left hand holding her right as you turn her either to the right or left. Individual dance steps done while apart have no lead and are usually routined figures.

In regard to the break and separated positions, it is interesting to observe the similarity of pattern between the lindy and the Cuban dances-both having come under the same West Indian influence.

COMMON MISTAKES

- 1. Doing the lindy like a fox-trot. The latter is danced primarily from the hips, while the lindy stresses knee action.
- 2. Exaggerating movements. The style of a dance should conform to the surroundings. The lindy can be done in a modified form that is not objectionable.
- 3. Taking steps too long. Especially in the double lindy, steps should be quite short.

Group Instruction

Ballroom dancing is perhaps the most difficult type of dancing to teach to a group. Not only because you are usually working with many who do not have the physical qualifications that you expect in those studying other dance forms, but also because ballroom dancing is not an individual style of dancing. You must harmonize the movements of two distinct personalities, one of whom must be trained as a choreographer. That is why the first ten or twenty lessons are the most important, and at the same time, the most difficult to teach. Once you have given the class a proper foundation, your work is greatly simplified.

There are a number of factors that determine your mode of teaching, such as the age level, size of the group, previous training and experience, and purpose of learning. For example, a normal course for teachers or students would not be conducted in the same manner as would a

semi-social series of lessons at a private club.

Therefore, the suggestions given here need not be too

strictly adhered to. Adjust the material to fit your own special requirements. You may wish to give a longer course of lessons, or your more advanced classes may be combined with practice periods or general dancing.

For the purpose of this chapter let us assume that you are dealing with an average size group of adult beginners, in which there are an equal number of men and girls.

MUSIC

Your choice of music is important. A good pianist who can play all popular rhythms well is an asset. His cooperation simplifies teaching as he can follow your cues and pick up the step with his music at any time. Also he can accentuate the beats, making it easier for beginners to

keep in time with the music.

On the other hand, dance records are preferable to a pianist who plays uninspiringly-besides being more economical. Starting and stopping the music may take a little time, but if necessary, that can be handled by an assistant. Choosing suitable records for teaching also requires a little time and effort, but you have your pick of all the finest dance bands in the country. Variety in music not only gives pupils more incentive to dance, but also educates them to the more intricate rhythms that orchestras provide.

When choosing records pay particular attention to the tempos-they should not be too fast for teaching purposes. Also try to pick those with clearly marked rhythms which

are not disrupted by the vocal arrangements.

TEACHING FORMATIONS

There are two principal ways of arranging the class for teaching; (1) line formations across the room and (2) circle formations. In the line arrangement all the pupils

may face in the same direction with the instructor working in front of the group, or a line of men may face a line of girls with both lines moving in the same direction. That is, while the girls move backwards, the men move forward and vice versa. In this case it is better to have someone demonstrating in front of each line.

Usually in the circle formation all the pupils may face forward in the Line of Dance, or the men and girls may face one another. In the latter case they usually work

as partners.

ELEMENTARY COURSE

LESSON I

At the first meeting of the class it is advisable to devote a few minutes to a brief outline of the work to be covered during the course. This will have added value if it is accompanied by a demonstration to music with a partner.

In teaching ballroom dancing the object should be to present it as clearly, simply, and interestingly as possible, and in a logical sequence that moves progressively from

one lesson to the next.

One of the simplest activities, with which everyone is acquainted, is walking. Since much of our ballroom dancing is based on the dance-walk, it is easy to introduce the pupils to this art by simply demonstrating the relationship between walking and dancing. Moreover, since the fox-trot is our most popular dance, and is based on the dance-walk plus the side-close step, it is logical to begin your instruction in this rhythm.

A good dancer should be able to step equally well in any direction. Too often the man fails to learn how to step backward correctly while the girl frequently neglects the forward dance-walk. Thus they are greatly handicapped in leading or following certain steps. Therefore, it is advisable to have all the pupils practice each dance figure both forward and backward.

Important as technic is, however, it must be sugarcoated and given in small doses. Don't expect a pupil to master the dance-walk in the first or second lesson. It is something that must be worked on and gradually perfected. Therefore, it is better to stress only a few of the main points of the forward dance-walk for perhaps five minutes during the first lesson and gradually perfect it with each succeeding lesson. For example, emphasize carrying the weight forward, delaying the forward swing of the leg and relaxing the ankle.

No explanation of the backward dance-walk need be given in the first lesson as it should be carefully and fully explained as a separate and specialized movement. Save it

for the second lesson.

After briefly practicing the forward dance-walk in the line formation, introduce the group to the circle formation, explaining that couples should always move around the floor in a counterclockwise direction. As the class is walking in a circle, signal the pianist to pick up the step with a fox-trot rhythm, or start a record playing. Then make a mental note of those who step on the accented beats and of those who seem to be having difficulty in keeping time with the music.

After a few minutes bring the group back into the line formation and give them the "side-close" step. This is a most important figure and should be carefully explained and presented as it is used in the basic step of most ballroom dances. Good dancing habits acquired at this point

will save a great deal of time and effort later.

Practice moving first to the left for 8 counts, and then to the right. Emphasize placing the foot directly to the side-not diagonally. Keep the side step fairly short. Stress relaxation of the muscles of the closing leg. Practice first without music and then with it.

After explaining that most ballroom steps are taken forward, backward or sideways, give a simple combination using the forward dance-walk and the side-close movement. (See pages 93–95.)

Early in the course—preferably during the first lesson ten or fifteen minutes should be given to a discussion of dance music and rhythms. You may be surprised by the number of persons who have no knowledge of music and are unable to differentiate between the various dance

rhythms.

Explain what is meant by 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 time, and demonstrate each rhythm with appropriate music. While the music is playing, count the beats and have the group keep time by clapping hands. Explain what is meant by a measure of music and emphasize the accented beat or beats in each measure. Explain phrasing or grouping of measures. If possible, demonstrate each type of rhythm with dance steps. A few minutes could profitably be given to this form of drill work in each lesson.

Briefly then, your first hour of instruction might be

divided as follows:

Minutes

- Explanation and demonstration of material to be given in 10 the course.
- Demonstration and practice of the forward dance-walk. 10
- Demonstration and practice of the side-close step. 10
- Demonstration and practice of the combination.
- Discussion of dance music and rhythms.
- Review.

LESSON II

Fortunately, good ballroom dancing is based upon the same principles of body mechanics as govern good posture. Therefore, the instructor not only has the opportunity but also the obligation to instill some of these prin-

ciples in his pupils to the best of his ability. In keeping with this policy the teacher will find it helpful to study carefully Chapter I, "Body Control," besides as much

related material on the subject as possible.

It gives the pupil added interest to feel that he is improving his posture and physique while he is learning to dance. However, this phase of the program should not be over-emphasized-perhaps five minutes of exercise and posture training at the start of each lesson. Choose a few simple exercises related to dance movements that can be given to a group that is dressed for ballroom dancing. For those who desire or need more advanced or specific forms of exercise, either arrange for private instruction, or explain and demonstrate some exercises that can be done by the individual at home.

If conditions permit, you can quickly and easily check on the posture of each pupil by the wall method as ex-

plained on pages 30-32.

Next, after briefly reviewing the forward dance-walk, carefully explain and demonstrate the backward dancewalk. This is most important as the backward dance-walk is not a natural movement and must be acquired by practice. The manner in which a girl steps backward largely determines her ability to follow. Review carefully Chapter III-"The Dance Walk." Note the exercise at the bottom of page 68.

You are now ready to teach the basic step of the foxtrot. First explain the change in rhythm. Up to this point the pupils have been taking only two steps to a measure, that is, stepping only on the accented beats. Now we have three steps to a measure with an "and" count in

between.

First practice the step sideways to establish the rhythm. Then do it forward, stressing the right angle pattern of the step, after which practice the figure backwards. Next combine a forward and backward basic step to form a

square, explaining that this combination is the basis for making turns. You may also precede the basic step with one or more dance-walk steps to make useful practice combinations.

Since we now have our first change of rhythm using a "quick" step, this is a good time to explain what is meant by the terms "quick" and "slow." (See pages 91-92.) From this point on you will be using these terms extensively along with the musical counts.

Here is a good opportunity for giving your pupils the feeling of actually dancing with partners; it can be done without fear of injuring toes and without considering the problem of leading and following. Simply ask them to do the basic step sideways and add one dance-walk step, making a three count combination.

Have the group form a circle, men and girls alternated, facing the center. It is better to practice the girls' part first as the pupils can watch the instructor. Do the basic step sideways to the right, stepping R-L-R (Count 1-and-2). Cross L over R (Count 3). The rhythm for the combina-

tion is Q-Q-S-S.

Then have the entire group turn to face the wall and practice the same combination moving to their left. After briefly demonstrating the customary dance position, have them take partners and practice the figure together. After the class has done it in the closed position, let each man release his partner's right hand and try the combination in the semi-open or "conversational" position. Since there is no need to consider each other's feet, couples can concentrate on steps and timing, while appreciating the fun of dancing with a partner.

Lesson II might be scheduled as follows:

Minutes

- 10 Exercises and a discussion of posture.
 - Review the forward dance-walk.
- 10 Teach the backward dance-walk.

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- 20 Teach the basic fox-trot step.
- 10 Teach combination.
 - 5 Review the basic step.

60

LESSON III

After a few simple exercises for improving posture and co-ordination, and inducing suppleness, review the mate-

rial given in the preceding lesson.

Now that you have taught the square or "box" step consisting of one basic step forward and one back, you are ready to teach the turn. At this point, introduce the class to turning with a partner, as this is one of the most important technics in ballroom dancing. Once this principle is grasped, especially by the men as they must do the leading, there should be smooth sailing. Read carefully "The Principles of Turning," pages 105–108. Note particularly the exercise at the bottom of page 107.

To acquaint your pupils with the principles underlying most turns with a partner, have them do a pivot turn as follows: take partners and place right feet together. Then in the closed position do a pivot turn while keeping right feet in contact. This exercise will emphasize for them the fact that turns are made in the direction of the forward foot; that the front or pivoting feet must remain close together; that weight is transferred alternately forward and backward; and that partners alternately move around a common pivoting point.

You may also have them attempt the reverse turn by placing left feet together and pivoting to the left. These pivot turns are used at this time merely to demonstrate the principles of turning and will be taken up later in de-

tail.

You can now apply the same principles to quarter turns with the basic step. (See page 101.) Have the pupils try the turns with partners after they have practiced them

individually. Stress the fact that opposite feet must be placed close together with each forward or backward step. Have partners hold each other's arms at the elbows instead of using the usual dance position. This way there is no problem of leading or following, and both can concentrate on pattern, rhythm, and footwork.

Lesson III can be divided approximately as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Review the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 15 Review the basic step in all its variations.
- 10 Explain and demonstrate the principles of turning.
- 25 Teach quarter turns—both left and right—using the basic step.

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LESSON IV

After reviewing the steps of the preceding lesson, you may find this a good time to introduce the waltz. Read Chapter IX with special attention to pages 162-168 on the basic step. While teaching the basic waltz step it is helpful to contrast it with the basic step of the fox-trot. First, emphasize the difference in rhythm which determines the difference in pattern. The basic fox-trot step begins sideways and finishes with the feet apart. The basic waltz step begins either forward or backward and finishes with the feet together. The fox-trot figure is done with no rise or fall of the body. The waltz begins with a slight downward movement as the supporting knee is slightly bent to accent the first step. This is followed by a rising movement during the side-close on the second and third counts. It is important to differentiate between styles of dancing as well as between patterns and rhythms.

Since you have already given quarter turns in the foxtrot, it is easy to do the same with the waltz. First have the pupils practice the turns separately, then with partners holding elbows. When first being taught the right turn, they will find it simpler to waltz forward right and back left. Later, practice should be given in starting a right turn by waltzing back left. The same applies to a left turn.

Lesson IV can be scheduled approximately as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 15 Review the basic fox-trot step with quarter turns.
- 20 Teach the basic waltz step.
- 15 Teach quarter turns in waltz time.

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LESSON V

After reviewing the basic fox-trot step with quarter turns, you are ready to teach half turns, or progressive turns as they are sometimes called. This can be done more successfully in the circle formation using the Line of Dance, the wall, and the center of the room as landmarks. Review pages 98–105, which describe these turns in detail.

After teaching both the right and left turns, you have reached an opportune time for introducing one of the most important technics of ballroom dancing—how to lead and follow. Because this is the crux of modern ballroom dancing, it should be explained and demonstrated carefully. (Study Chapter V.)

Since the pupils from this point on will be practicing more in the regular dance positions, you should show them the right and wrong ways of holding a partner; at the same time explain why certain positions and holds are preferable.

Also point out that a girl's ability to follow well depends a great deal upon her balance and control of weight through mastery of the backward dance-walk; that she must wait for her partner's lead (in case he gives any!). It should be emphasized that the girl controls the lead, or the amount of pressure against her partner, by the degree of her resistance as she moves backward. To establish this concept of the lead, have the girl place both hands against her partner's shoulders while he simply walks forward with his hands at his sides, thus giving the lead with his body. The girl can regulate the degree of pressure or resistance as she walks backward. She should try to keep it as light as possible without actually pulling away from her partner.

The man, on the other hand, should be made conscious of the fact that he must indicate any change of direction or change of rhythm by a pressure with his right arm

or hand.

You can now go back to the half turns and have the pupils practice them with partners, applying the principles of leading and following that you have just explained. You will find that the progressive turn lends itself readily to a definite lead because of the rotary nature of the figure. During the second half of the turn the leader takes his steps almost in place, and he should learn to swing his partner around as he completes the turn. In this way he will soon become conscious of directing his partner's movements.

Lesson V can be divided approximately as follows:

Minutes

Exercises.

Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.

Review quarter turns with the basic step of the fox-trot.

Teach half turns with the basic step of the fox-trot.

Explain and demonstrate how to lead and follow, and correct dance positions.

Practice half turns with partners.

LESSON VI

Now that the pupils understand the principles of leading and following, you should help them apply this knowledge to all steps and combinations.

Review quarter turns with the basic step, but this time have the man lead into the turns. Also review the first combination given with partners in Lesson III. But this time have each couple take four dance-walk steps before the man leads into a quarter turn right to face the wall; then have the man do the basic step sideways to his left followed by a cross step with his right. The man should clearly indicate each basic step and cross-over by a pressure with his right arm or hand. After repeating the combination a few times, he should swing his partner back in front of him as he steps forward in the Line of Dance. Also review the basic waltz step with quarter turns left and right, emphasizing leading and following.

Now you are ready to add more variation to both the fox-trot and the waltz—this time by means of the "hesitation." You may find it easier to teach the waltz hesitation first, as it is merely the first step of the basic figure with the other two counts held. Teach it in all variations as explained on pages 175–178. After the class has practiced the step individually in line formation, let them take partners and repeat the hesitation figures and combinations,

with emphasis on leading and following.

Next apply similar methods to teaching the balance and hesitation in fox-trot rhythm as described on pages 112–115.

A schedule for Lesson VI might be as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 10 Review the basic fox-trot step in various combinations with the dance-walk.



The basic conga step done with a turn.

See page 237.

Stepping to the side in the basic step of the conga. Knees are kept in easy flexion, and hips sway opposite to the moving leg. See page 236.



Beginning a lindy hop step in the open position. See page 251.





The lindy hop break. See page 254.

- 10 Review the basic waltz step with quarter turns.
- 15 Teach the waltz hesitation step.
- 15 Teach the fox-trot balance and hesitation steps.

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LESSON VII

Review the quarter and half turns with the basic foxtrot step; likewise the balance and hesitation figures. Then combine the side balance with the basic step done sideways as described on page 112. Next alternate this combination with the three-count combination given in Lesson II. After a few minutes of practice, allow the men to mix the two combinations at their own discretion with their partners depending entirely upon the lead in order to follow the sequence of steps.

For the cross-over step the man turns the girl from a closed to a partially open position by a pressure of his right hand at her waist, whereas the balance step is done directly sideways in the closed position. Thus there should be no misunderstanding of the leader's intention. If the man is allowed to arrange his own sequence of steps he gains confidence in his ability to lead.

During the second half of the period review the basic waltz steps and hesitation. You may wish to give a few simple practice combinations of these two figures, such as a forward hesitation left followed by a backward waltz step right. This can be made into a left turn. Or give two forward hesitations and two basic steps forward in circle formation.

Next introduce the open-waltz step. (See pages 171–173.) This is a comparatively simple step as it consists of a continuous walking movement with an accented step on the first beat of each measure. It is a most useful step when combined with other figures.

Give a practice combination of two open-waltz steps

followed by two basic waltz steps. Then give one openwaltz step and two basic steps so that there is one openwaltz step between each two basic figures. These combinations are the patterns for progressive waltz turns which will be given in the following lesson.

Lesson VII can be scheduled as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 10 Review the basic step and the balance and hesitation steps in the fox-trot.
- 10. Give practice combinations.
- 15 Review the basic waltz step and hesitation.
- 15 Teach the open-waltz step with combinations.

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LESSON VIII

This lesson might well begin as a continuation of the preceding one. After reviewing the waltz combinations given in Lesson VII, teach the half or progressive waltz turns. (See pages 167–171.) Next precede the turn with two measures of the open-waltz step. After practicing this combination for both left and right turns, try the second combination in which the turns are alternated with only one open-waltz figure in between. As a link between turns the open-waltz is somewhat easier to use than the basic step.

Instead of devoting any remaining time in this lesson to the fox-trot, it might be advisable to introduce the class to the rumba. Since the rumba is now one of our most popular dances, it should be taught as early in the course as convenient. It is a simple matter to teach the basic rumba step forward, backward, and sideways because the pattern and musical count are the same as for the basic step of the fox-trot. For a description of the basic rumba step see pages 215–216. At present it is unnecessary to

stress hip action and style-they can be discussed in a more advanced course.

This lesson may be divided as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 10 Review the waltz combinations of the preceding lesson.
- 15 Teach half turns in the waltz.
- 15 Teach combinations with half turns.
- 10 Teach the basic rumba step.

60

LESSON IX

Now let us return to the fox-trot and take up an important step that is usually a little difficult for the average dancer-the pivot turn. (Read pages 116-119.) It was used for demonstration purposes back in Lesson III, and you have been using quarter pivot turns in some of the combinations.

At this point emphasis should be put on the right turn. The left pivot can be stressed when you teach the tango and slow fox-trot during the intermediate course. The progressive pivot turns also should be given in the more advanced classes.

The second part of the class can be devoted to teaching quarter turns left in the rumba. (See page 217.) As a rule the basic step is not used for right turns. Also teach the rumba three-step at this time. (See pages 217-218.)

Lesson IX can be divided approximately as follows:

Minutes

- Exercises.
- Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 10 Review half turns with the basic step of the fox-trot.
- 15 Teach the pivot turn right in the fox-trot. 10 Review half turns in the waltz.

 - Teach the three-step and quarter turns left in the rumba.

LESSON X

In this final lesson of the elementary course you can give a general review, answering questions and discussing problems. You might include a short discussion on ballroom etiquette. There are a number of good books on the subject.

If time permits and if the class has made sufficient progress, you could teach the basic step of the samba.

(See Chapter XIII.)

The majority of the class by now should be able to do a creditable fox-trot and waltz, and have sufficient selfconfidence to get on the dance floor when a rumba is played. However, this first course of ten lessons is primarily a foundation for intermediate and advanced work.

An intermediate course of lessons should include the slow fox-trot, the waltz, the tango, the rumba, and the samba. You might work on the fox-trot and waltz during one half of the period, and devote the remaining time to the Latin American rhythms.

If you are continuing with the same group, you can pick up from where you left off in the first series of lessons. However, if you have a different group, who are not beginners, but lack technic, you may find it necessary to dove-tail some of the preceding material with the more advanced work. That must be left to the discretion of the instructor as no two situations are alike. If there is too great a variation in abilities, have an assistant or one of the more advanced pupils work with the slower ones on the side until they catch up.

Of course, if you can keep your classes graded according to experience and ability, your teaching problems will

be greatly simplified.

INTERMEDIATE COURSE

LESSON I

As the slow fox-trot requires better co-ordination and body control than dances played at faster tempos, much attention should be given to the dance-walk, since the proper use of the heel in stepping has much to do with balance and timing.

The basic step is the same for both the slow and medium fox-trots; therefore review the material covering the basic step given in the preceding course. Next, teach the three-step both forward and backward. (See pages 130–131.)

If you plan to devote the second half of the period to Latin American rhythms, review or teach—as the case may be—the rumba material given in the elementary course. Then, if time allows, give the basic step of the tango. (See pages 191–193.) Instead of teaching both rumba and tango in the same period you may prefer to give them in alternate lessons.

Note that the basic steps of the fox-trot and rumba have the same pattern, while those of the waltz and tango are similar. That is, the latter two finish with the feet together while the former finish with the feet separated. Stress the fact that the basic step of both the fox-trot and rumba begins to the side, while the first "quick" step of the tango must be taken either forward or backward. This is important in avoiding a fox-trot rhythm or style while dancing the tango. Otherwise, many of the steps used in the slow fox-trot and tango are similar.

Lesson I might be scheduled as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises (May be omitted for first lesson).
- 5 Review the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 15 Review the basic step of the fox-trot with turns.
- 10 Teach the three-step of the slow fox-trot.

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- 10 Review the basic rumba step.
- 15 Teach the basic tango step.

LESSON II

Review quarter and half turns with the basic fox-trot step. Review the three-step. Teach the three-step turn right and left using the outside position. You have now utilized the three most commonly used dance positions—closed, open, and outside. Demonstrate how to lead from one position to another; then let the class practice with different partners.

Review the rumba three-step and explain the hip action as described on pages 211–215. First ask the class to practice the hip movement with a slow walk—forward, backward, and side-close. Later have them apply it to the three-step, which is easier than applying it to the basic step.

Teach the tango combination described on page 194,

turning both left and right.

Lesson II can be scheduled as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 10 Review the basic fox-trot steps.
- 10 Teach the three-step turn.
- 5 Review the rumba steps.
- 10 Teach the hip movement of the rumba.
- 5 Review the basic tango step.
- 10 Teach the tango combination.

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LESSON III

Review the three-step and three-step turns in the slow fox-trot.

Review the waltz steps given in the elementary course, including quarter turns, half turns, hesitations, and the open-waltz step which corresponds to the three-step of the fox-trot.

Practice the rumba hip movement, and review all the steps given in the preceding lesson. Review the tango combination given in Lesson II.

Following is an approximate time schedule for Lesson III:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 10 Review the three-step with turns.
- 15 Review the waltz steps from the elementary course.
- 10 Practice the rumba hip movement forward, backward, and sideways.
- 10 Review the rumba steps.
- 5 Review the tango combination.

60

LESSON IV

The first part of this period can be given to the waltz. If the group is well versed in the fundamental figures as taught in the elementary course, you can give them the open-waltz turns. (See pages 172–175.) They are done exactly the same as the three-step turns of the fox-trot except in waltz time.

Continue drill on rumba technics. Add the hip movement to the basic step. In tango rhythm teach the side-progressive step as described on pages 195–196.

A lesson plan can be arranged as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 15 Teach the open-waltz turns.

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15 Practice the rumba hip movement and apply it to the basic step.

20 Review the tango steps and teach the side-progressive step.

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LESSON V

Let us return to the slow fox-trot and work on the rock step. (See pages 134–136.) Then try the same step in rumba rhythm (page 219) and, if you have time, teach the tango version of the step (pages 197–198).

This gives you an opportunity to compare and contrast

the dance style of three different rhythms.

The lesson plan might be as follows:

Minutes

5 Exercises.

- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 15 Teach the rock step in slow fox-trot time.

5 Review the open-waltz turns.

10 Teach the rock step in rumba rhythm.

10 Review the tango steps.

10 Teach the rock step in the tango.

60

LESSON VI

It is advisable to teach the rock-change as a variation of the rock step. The same plan can be used as in Lesson V—teaching the same step in all three rhythms. In each case you will find a description of the step immediately following that of the rock step.

This lesson plan will correspond to the preceding one:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 20 Review the rock step of the slow fox-trot and teach the rock-change step.

15 Review the rock step of the rumba and teach the rock-change step.

15 Review the rock step of the tango and teach the rock-change step.

60

LESSON VII

Returning to the waltz we can take up the third variation in rhythm—the canter waltz. (See pages 178–180.) Work out a number of simple combinations using the basic step and hesitation. For example, take two canter steps followed by two waltz steps, or one canter and two waltz steps, etc.

Review the four fundamental rumba steps given thus

far, and continue practice on the hip movement.

Review the four steps and combinations in the tango and add the three-step turn. (See page 200.) This has already been given in fox-trot and waltz rhythm so there should be no difficulty with it.

If time permits, practice on the samba. Although it hasn't been specified, the samba can be worked in for a few minutes at any time during the course. In fact, it could be combined with the exercise period as it is a good limbering-up step.

A time schedule for Lesson VII can be as follows:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 20 Teach the canter rhythm in the waltz.
- 10 Review the rumba steps.
- 10 Review the tango steps.
 - 5 Teach the three-step turn in the tango.
- 5 Teach the samba step.

60

LESSON VIII

Beginning again with the slow fox-trot we can add the "twinkle" to our repertory of fundamental steps. Have your pupils practice it in all variations as described on pages 138–140. However, when they first do it with a partner, have them start with the sideward twinkle, as it is easier to lead and there is no danger of their trampling on one another's toes. It is usually done in combination with the basic step.

You now have given three combinations that begin in the same way—a basic step sideways with the leader fac-

ing the wall.

After having done the basic step to his left, the man can indicate a cross-over step, a balance to his right, or a twinkle step to his right. After reviewing these three combinations, have the leaders mix them up, with their partners depending entirely upon the lead for guidance.

After reviewing the rumba steps and hip movement, teach the "break" step (pages 221–222). When done alternately to the right and left, it can be used as a separate step.

In the tango, review the previous material and add the "corté," or dip, to the steps already given. (See pages

201–203.)

The following is a lesson plan for this period:

Minutes

- 5 Exercises.
- 5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.
- 10 Teach the twinkle step in the slow fox-trot.
- 10 Teach a combination using the twinkle.
- 15 Review the rumba and add the break step.
- 15 Review the tango and add the corté.

LESSON IX

We now come to the last and most difficult of the fundamental steps—the pivot turn. The pivot turn to the right was given in the medium fox-trot. Now both right and left pivot turns in the slow fox-trot should be taught in the rhythm of Q—Q—S. (See pages 140–141.) These turns can be combined with the basic step to make numerous interesting combinations. For example, walk L—R (Count 1-2), do a basic step forward L—R—L beginning a left turn (Count 3-and-4); continue the turn with a pivot R—L—R (Count 5-and-6); complete the turn with a basic step L—R—L (Count 7-and-8). Start walking right and reverse the entire combination turning right.

Teach the same pivot turns to tango rhythm putting more emphasis on left turns. In rumba rhythm teach the circle turns left and right using the three-step. (See pages 224–225.)

As a practice combination for the man's part, have your students do three basic steps turning left. On the fourth measure have them do a forward rock-change step with the right foot, then continue moving backward in the circle turn left for three measures, then do a rock-change back on the right foot.

The eight-measure combination can be repeated if de-

sired.

Lesson IX might be scheduled as follows:

Minutes

5 Exercises.

5 Practice the forward and backward dance-walk.

20 Teach pivot turns in slow fox-trot rhythm.

15 Teach pivot turns in tango rhythm.

15 Teach circle turns left and right in the rumba.

LESSON X

This last session can be devoted to a general review of preceding material. During the previous lesson tell the class to come prepared to ask questions or present problems.

Some instructors may find these courses somewhat crowded and may wish to spread the material over twelve to fifteen lessons, thus allowing more time for practicing combinations and perfecting technic. Anyway, those going on into the advanced class should have a good working vocabulary of most of the fundamental steps in the medium and slow fox-trot, the waltz, the tango, the rumba, and the samba. The fast fox-trot, or Peabody one-step, the Viennese waltz, the mambo, and jitterbug steps can be taken up in the advanced class. Those who have poor rhythm and co-ordination, or who are ill-prepared because of missing classes should be induced to repeat the intermediate course. The advanced class should be reserved for those with proven ability.

An advanced class can continue indefinitely. There are an endless number of combinations that can be given using only the fundamental figures taught in the two preliminary courses. It is in this class that the pupil really begins to dance. You now have an opportunity to help students perfect technic and style; to teach interesting combinations in all rhythms; to improve their ability to

lead or follow.

From an advanced group you may be able to develop assistants who can help you in your other classes or coach the newcomers to the advanced group. As this group increases in number, a social dance club might be organized, admitting those who have successfully completed the prescribed courses. A chairman should be chosen from the group to help make arrangements for any social functions that might be planned.

PERTINENT PROBLEMS

What is a simple way to change partners?

In the circle formation have the partners face each other—the men facing in the Line of Dance. Partners take right hands, and on the command, "Change partners," pass each other on the right and move forward to the next person. Next they present left hands and pass on the left, and so on. This is the Grand Right-and-Left which they may continue until signaled to stop. However, for regular class instruction, to save time, it is sufficient to say, "Face your partner," and, "Move forward to your next partner."

What do you do when there are extra men in the class?

After the lead has been taught, change partners often—making sure that the extra men get equal opportunity to practice with a girl. The ones without partners can practice the steps by themselves. In the elementary and intermediate courses most men do not mind practicing steps together while holding the elbow position.

What do you do when there are extra girls in the class? This problem is simpler as most girls do not object to dancing together. Changing partners often gives them an equal opportunity to dance with men partners.

What do you do with a class of all boys or all girls?

A course of ten lessons can readily be given to a group before it is necessary to work with partners. In case of a class at a boys' school, make arrangements to have a similar group at a girls' school if possible. After giving an elementary course to each group, bring the two together. Courses can be given in this manner at such institutions as the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.

Does taking the man's part affect a girl's ability to follow?

Yes. It usually improves. Most girls who lead well also follow well, provided they know what they are doing. A girl who has never taken the man's part may take the lead away from her partner without realizing it. If she understands the principles of leading and following, she can change from leader to follower without difficulty. Leading also results in a better understanding of the steps.

TIPS TO TEACHERS

1. Know your subject. The more thoroughly you understand the various ballroom dances, the more clearly you will be able to explain them to others. Besides perfecting your own technic by continual practice and study, learn the history and background of social dancing by reading all available material on the subject. Know why as well as how.

2. Be able to demonstrate what you are teaching. Many pupils learn more quickly by eye than by ear. Children especially are great imitators. Set a good example.

- 3. Cultivate a pleasing voice. It is a big asset to be able to speak clearly and resonantly. If you are not aware of how your voice sounds, have a recording made, or, better still, consult a good voice teacher. A few lessons in breath control, diction, and improvement of tonal qualities constitute a good investment.
- 4. Avoid over-talking. Be specific but brief in your explanations. Don't stress more than one or two points at a time. Keep the class moving. They learn by doing.
- 5. Be careful of your appearance. You are often judged by the way you look. Girls! Avoid wearing articles of adornment that tend to distract from what you are saying or doing. Dress neatly and appropriately.
- 6. Don't take yourself too seriously. Dancing is for pleasure. You can usually keep a group relaxed and at ease with a bit of humor or comedy. A happy class is a relaxed class. Good movement and body control depend upon relaxation.

Checking Up

Can you answer the following questions? Allow two points for each question correctly answered. Score yourself as follows: 70-78, Fair; 80-88, Good; 90-100, Excellent. Answers are given at the end of this chapter.

1. How does ballroom dancing, when it is done correctly, give you both physical and mental poise?

2. What effect has age upon your ability to learn to

dance?

3. What is the difference between "hollow-back" and "sway-back?"

4. How does ballroom dancing improve your walk?

5. What three types of activities, when practiced daily, are of great value toward helping to keep one physically fit?

6. How does the dance-walk strengthen the muscles

of the feet?

7. What is the general action of the diaphragm during respiration?

8. How does the forward dance-walk differ from ordinary walking?

9. Why is it preferable to step heel first when

moving forward?

10. How can the dancer who is moving forward avoid bumping his partner's knees?

11. If you are moving backward, how can you pre-

vent your partner from stepping on your toes?

12. How can you avoid being classified as a "heavy dancer?

- 13. Why should you dance as nearly as possible toe-to-toe with your partner while in the closed position?
- 14. How can you make an attractive appearance on the dance floor?
- 15. Why should you avoid looking at your feet while dancing?
- 16. Should a couple transfer their weight exactly at the same time? Why?
- 17. Why should the leader carry his right elbow well raised?
- 18. What is the underlying principle of leading and following?
 - 19. What is meant by a strong lead?
 - 20. When does the girl control the lead?
 - 21. How can the girl be sure that she is following?
- 22. How does the man give the lead when stepping forward?
 - 23. What is meant by a progressive turn?
 - 24. How is the lead indicated for most turns?
- 25. What is the relative position of a couple's feet as they pivot?
- 26. What is meant by "body torsion" or "contrary body movement"?
- 27. What is the difference between a "rock turn" and a "pivot turn"?

28. With your left foot free, how can you begin a right turn?

29. Give three principles that apply to most turns

made in the closed position.

30. What is meant by the "Line of Dance"?

31. What are the three dance positions most commonly used?

32. Why should the girl look over her partner's right

shoulder while in the closed position?

33. How did the term "fox-trot" originate?

- 34. Why is it preferable to give two counts to each measure of fox-trot music even though it is written in 4/4 time?
- 35. What is meant by "quick" and "slow" in reference to dance rhythm?

36. Why are these terms not used in the waltz?

- 37. Approximately how old is the modern ballroom version of the waltz?
- 38. How does the basic fox-trot step differ from the basic waltz step?

89. Why is the first step of the basic waltz figure taken either forward or backward rather than sideways?

40. How does the Viennese waltz differ from the modern waltz?

41. What is meant by "canter" rhythm?

42. What three dance rhythms are used most commonly in waltz time?

43. What have the basic fox-trot and the basic rumba

steps in common?

44. Name two dances that use the ball-change movement.

45. How many measures of music are required for the basic conga step?

46. What have the Cuban conga and the Brazilian marcha in common?

- 47. In what way is the basic samba step comparable to the waltz?
- 48. How and when did the lindy hop receive its name?
- 49. In what way does "swing" differ from other fox-trot music?
- 50. How many measures of music are required for the basic lindy step?

ANSWERS

- 1. Physical poise depends upon body control, which is essential to good dancing. As increased technical skill gives you more confidence, the resulting sense of sureness is reflected in your mental attitude.
- 2. Tests have shown that one's ability to learn suffers little with the passing years. In regard to physical activities, it depends largely upon one's present body condition and muscle control.
- 3. "Hollow-back" is a popular term used to describe an overcurved lumbar section. "Sway-back" indicates a common type of faulty posture in which the chest or thoracic section is tilted backward in relation to the pelvis.
- 4. The dance-walk, which is the basis for most ball-room dancing, is a modification of a correct, normal walk. One complements the other.
- 5. (1) Exercises to contract all our muscles. (2) Exercises to give full mobility to all our joints. (3) Passive exercises in the form of intermittent periods for relaxation.
- 6. When you step either forward or backward in the dance-walk, the muscles of the feet are actively used in a natural manner, and in accordance with good body mechanics. Dancing on the balls of the feet does not give this beneficial effect.

7. As you inhale, the diaphragm should be allowed to descend; and as you exhale, it relaxes and rises to its

original position.

8. There are two fundamental differences: (1) The forward dance-walk emphasizes a delayed forward swing of the leg. (2) The foot keeps light contact with the floor.

- By stepping forward heel first you can transfer your weight in a natural progressive movement which does not check the forward progression of the body. Also it enables you to avoid sliding and gives you better control of your weight.
- 10. By delaying the forward swing of the leg, the dancer stepping forward gives his partner time enough to move the corresponding leg backward.

11. By stepping backward with a fully extended leg, including pointed toes, you can usually avoid your partner's foot provided he steps forward with good form.

- 12. "Light" or "heavy" dancing is primarily a question of balance and relaxation. By keeping your weight centered forward over the balls of the feet, you can dance lightly. Heavy dancing, on the other hand, is associated with tense muscles and lack of balance.
- 13. Besides presenting a more attractive appearance, it enables you to step close to your partner's foot which is diagonally opposite. This is essential to good dancing.
- 14. Appearance is largely a matter of line. By maintaining correct body alignment and stepping with an extended leg, the resulting lines are sure to be attractive.
- 15. Looking down tends to throw the body out of alignment, with resulting loss of poise. It also indicates a lack of confidence. One cannot follow by watching the feet of one's partner, since pressure with the arm or upper body should precede movements of the feet.

16. No. If a couple transferred their weight simulta-

neously, there would be no lead.

17. By keeping his right elbow well raised and in contact with his partner's left arm, the leader can give a more definite lead, especially for turns. It also adds style to his dancing.

18. Leading and following is based upon the principle that a couple do not step at the same time. The one

who transfers his weight first is leading.

19. A strong lead is determined by three different

factors. Knowledge of steps; pressure; timing.

20. The girl controls the lead when she is moving backward. As her partner moves forward, she regulates the degree of pressure which constitutes the lead.

21. In order to follow, the girl must wait for her partner to move first. She follows the line of least resistance.

If there is no pressure, there is no lead.

22. When he is moving forward, the man leads with his upper body. His partner regulates the lead by the degree of her resistance.

23. Progressive turns are made by rotating while moving continually in the same general direction. Half-

turns are progressive; quarter-turns are not.

24. The lead for most turns is indicated by a rotation of the shoulders in the direction of the forward foot.

- 25. Pivoting feet must remain close together; right feet together for right turns and left feet in contact for left turns.
- 26. The resulting twist of the body as one leads into a turn or similar movement. It is an exaggeration of a natural form of opposition employed in walking in which the left arm swings forward to oppose the right leg and the right arm moves in unison with the left leg.

27. Although the relative position of the feet remains the same for both, a pivot turn is made strictly as a rotary movement without body sway, while the rock turn combines a forward and backward movement of the

body with the rotation.

- 28. You can begin a right turn by stepping back on the left foot.
- 29. (1) Turns are made in the direction of the forward foot. (2) Partners alternately move around each other. (3) Steps are taken alternately forward and backward.
- 30. "Line of Dance" is a term used to indicate the direction in which the couples travel counter-clockwise around the floor. It is abbreviated L O D.
- 31. (1) The "closed" position, in which a couple are practically toe-to-toe with their shoulders parallel. (2) The "open" position, in which both face in the same general direction. It may vary from a slight turning of the body to a full open position in which the outside arms hang at the sides. This is also called the "conversational" position. (3) The "outside" position, which may be either right or left depending upon whether the right or the left sides are in contact. Shoulders should be kept parallel.
- 32. By looking over her partner's right shoulder, the girl can keep her shoulders, and thus her feet, parallel to those of her partner. When the head is turned the shoulders and feet tend to follow.
- 33. The fox-trot was named after a musical-comedy star by the name of Harry Fox.
- 34. Although fox-trot music is written in 4/4 time, it is played in what is known as "common time," in which the first and third beats of a measure receive considerably more emphasis than do the other two beats. In the dance-walk each step is taken exactly on these accented beats. The unaccented beats can be given the count of "and."
- 35. "Quick" and "slow" refer to the relative length of time your weight remains on one foot after a step is taken. Two quick steps are equal in time to one slow step.

36. In the basic waltz figure each step receives the same amount of time; therefore the terms "quick" and "slow" are unnecessary. However, they could be used in canter rhythm.

37. The modern version of the waltz was danced in the Paris opera in the year 1790. Various forms of the waltz were danced for many years before that, how-

ever.

38. The basic waltz and basic fox-trot figures each require three transfers of weight. The waltz step, however, is done to three counts of music, while the fox-trot step requires only two. The waltz figure begins with either a forward or a backward step and finishes with the feet together. The basic fox-trot figure, on the other hand, is begun with a side step and finishes with the feet separated.

39. The first step of the waltz should be emphasized to correspond with the accented first beat of the measure. This is done by making it longer. A long, accented side

step would appear awkward.

40. They differ primarily in tempo. The faster tempo of the Viennese waltz determines the characteristic style of that dance.

- 41. By "canter" is meant an uneven form of waltz rhythm in which weight is transferred on the first and third beats of a measure.
- 42. (1) The basic waltz rhythm, in which weight is transferred on each of the three beats of a measure. (2) Hesitation rhythm, which is obtained by stepping only on the accented first beat. (3) Canter rhythm, the result of stepping on the first and third beats of a measure.
- 43. Both the basic fox-trot and basic rumba steps have the same pattern, and each requires three transfers of weight to one measure or two counts of music.

- 44. Both the peabody and the samba use a ball-change movement. A modified form of the ball-change is used also in the Viennese waltz.
- 45. The basic conga step requires two measures or four counts of music.
- 46. Both the conga and the marcha are danced in the streets at carnival time in Havana and Rio de Janeiro, respectively.
- 47. The pattern of the waltz and the basic samba step are similar; although the waltz requires three beats of music while the samba is done to two counts.
- 48. The lindy hop received its name in 1927 in commemoration of Lindbergh's flight to Paris.
- 49. Swing music is characterized by a steady 4/4 drum beat as contrasted to the "common time" of other fox-trot music. For that reason it is better to give this type of music four counts to a measure.
- 50. The basic lindy hop figure, either single or double, requires two measures or eight counts of music. However, when doing the break, most dancers change the rhythm by using a figure of six counts or the equivalent of one and one-half measures of music.